Making a Manuscript, Making a Cult

Scribal Production of the Syriac Life of Symeon the Stylite in Late Antiquity

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For scholars of the ancient and early medieval world, accidents of survival obscure the early history of the vast majority of texts. In most cases, the oldest manuscripts of classical and late antique Greek and Latin texts date to the ninth or tenth centuries. The temporal gap between the creation of a text and its surviving

Abbreviations for manuscripts:

- V = Vaticanus Syriacus 160, fols. 1v-79v (473 CE).
- B_I = British Library Add. 14484, fols. 48v-133v (6th century).
- B₂ = British Library Add. 14484, fols. 134r-152v (6th century).
- G = Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai Georgian 6, fols. 12r-66v (983 CE).

Abbreviations for major transcriptions and translations:

- As. = S. E. Assemani, ed. and trans., Acta sanctorum martyrum

 Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa,
 adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae, vol. 2 (Rome, 1748).
- Bj. = P. Bedjan, ed., *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1890–97).
- Doran = R. Doran, trans., *The Lives of Simeon Stylites,* Cistercian Studies 112 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1992).
 - Gar. = G. Garitte, trans., Vies géorgiennes de S. Syméon Stylite l'Ancien et de S. Éphrem, vol. 2, CSCO 172, Iber. 8 (Louvain, 1957).
- Lent = F. Lent, "The Life of St. Simeon Stylites: A Translation of the Syriac Text in Bedjan's *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, Vol. IV," *JAOS* 35 (1915): 103–98.
- 1 As P. Mass states succinctly, "We have no autograph manuscripts of the Greek and Roman classical writers and no copies which have been collated with the originals; the manuscripts we possess derive from the originals through an unknown number of intermediate copies, and are consequently of questionable trustworthiness" (*Textual Criticism*, trans. B. Flower [Oxford, 1958], 1).

manuscripts poses difficulties for those seeking to identify the version of the text closest to the original, thus precipitating the painstaking work of textual criticism. It also distances scholars from the individuals and communities who first copied and used ancient texts. Yet, in a highly unusual case, three early manuscripts of the Syriac *Life of Symeon* survive into the present day, providing a concrete example of a text that circulated in drastically different versions within the first hundred years following its creation.² The earliest, dating to 473, is currently housed at the Vatican Apostolic Library: Vaticanus Syriacus 160, fols. IV–79V (V).³ Two

- 2 Collectors acquired all three manuscripts from Dayr al-Suryān (the Monastery of the Syrians), located between Alexandria and Cairo, Egypt. Dayr al-Suryān is responsible for preserving over 100 Syriac manuscripts dated prior to the year 1000 (S. Brock, "Without Mushê of Nisibis, Where Would We Be? Some Reflections on the Transmission of Syriac Literature," *JEChrSt* 56.1–4 [2004]: 18). For a recent checklist of dated Syriac manuscripts, see S. Brock, "A Tentative Checklist of Dated Syriac Manuscripts up to 1300," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 15.1 (2012): 21–48. J. S. Assemani acquired V during his visit to the monastery in 1715 (Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 3 vols. [Rome, 1719], 1:606). Henry Tattam acquired B₁ and B₂; they entered the British Museum's collection in 1843 (W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, Acquired since the Year 1838*, 3 vols. [London, 1870–72], 3:xiii).
- 3 For catalogue entries, see Assemani, BO, 1:235-55, 1:606; S. E. Assemani and J. S. Assemani, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana codicum manuscriptorum catalogus: Partis prima, tomus tertius, complectens reliquos codices chaldaicos sive syriacos (Rome, 1759), 319. S. E. Assemani transcribed this manuscript and provided a loose Latin translation (As., 268-398). Doran translated the text into English.

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sixth-century manuscripts are now housed in the British Library: British Library Add. 14484, folios 48v-133v (B_I),⁴ and British Library Add. 14484, folios 134r–152v (B₂).⁵ Nineteenth-century curators bound together the two British Library manuscripts in the same volume (Add. 14484), but they were produced separately. These

His publication includes an appendix that coordinates his chapter numbers with V, Assemani's transcription, and Bedjan's transcription of B_I (see note 4; Doran, 103-98, 201-5). Digital photos of this manuscript are now freely available online through the website of the Vatican Apostolic Library. Following its acquisition by the Vatican Apostolic Library, Vaticanus Syriacus 160, fols. 1v-79v (which contains the Syriac Life of Symeon), was bound with at least two additional manuscripts that contain lives of martyrs (fols. 80v-240v). These manuscripts were written in separate hands and were not produced in association with fols. IV-79V. In the following pages, I refer only to fols. 1v-79v when I discuss V. Because Assemani's and Bedjan's transcriptions often contain errors and points of imprecision, I provide direct reference to manuscripts and their transcriptions plus translations when I cite the Syriac Life of Symeon, usually referring to the page rather than the chapter number, since the various versions of the Syriac Life present different orders and therefore different chapter enumerations. Regarding manuscript transcriptions and, more specifically, orthographic devices, I use the linea occultans, syāmē, and homograph dots. I limit my use of homograph dots to select verbs (a dot below perfect pe'al verbs and a dot above active pe'al participles), select pronouns, the feminine singular possessive suffix, and a few additional homographs; the dotting systems in the manuscripts (particularly V) are idiosyncratic. I reproduce punctuation as found in the manuscripts. I retain spellings found in the manuscript even if that spelling does not accord with what becomes standard in later Syriac.

- 4 For the catalogue entry, see Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, 3:1152. Bedjan transcribed the manuscript, with reference to Assemani's transcription of V and British Library Add. 12174, fols. 18v-47v, which dates to 1197 (Bj., 507-644). H. Lietzmann and H. Hilgenfeld published a German translation of Bedjan's transcription in Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites, TU 32.4 (Leipzig, 1908), 80-180. Lent published an English translation (Lent, 111-98).
- 5 For the catalogue entry, see Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, 3:1152-53. P. Peeters also provides a useful description of the manuscript in Orient et Byzance: Le tréfonds oriental de l'hagiographie byzantine, SubsHag 26 (Brussels, 1950), 115. This manuscript has not been transcribed or translated. It has been badly damaged and only a portion of the original text survives. However, the surviving portions of B2 correspond closely with G, which dates to 983. For missing sections of B2, I refer to Garitte's Latin translation of this manuscript (Gar., 1-53). Adam Bremer-McCollum confirmed for me the precision of the Latin translation of the Georgian. I thank him for sharing his assessment with me.
- 6 A total of five manuscripts were bound together as Add. 14484 following their acquisition by the British Museum in 1843. Two pieces of evidence indicate that the two manuscripts of the Syriac

three manuscripts offer insight into the close association between the transmission of a hagiography and the cult of saints in late antiquity.

The Syriac Life of Symeon recounts the activities of the famous holy man and first column-stander, Symeon the Stylite the Elder (d. 459 CE). All three late antique versions share a core of unified material. They begin with Symeon's early life in Cilicia, time in the Teleda monastery, and arrival in Telanissos.⁸ They end with an explanation of Symeon's ascent to the column and death. These two narrative sections bookend a sizable compilation of miracle accounts, descriptions of Symeon's visions, and reports of his ascetic practices.

Although the three late antique recensions retain this basic structure, each recension presents diverging accounts of events, a unique order, and singular descriptions of the saint.¹⁰ Previous scholars addressed

Life of Symeon the Stylite currently bound in Add. 14484 were produced separately. First, the two manuscripts display unique hands. Second, the leaves of the folios in the two manuscripts differ in size (B₁: 10½ inches by 8¾ inches; B₂: 10¾ inches by 8 inches). See Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, 1:98-100, 3:1152-53, 3:1224.

- In addition to the Syriac Life of Symeon in its various recensions, two other lives of Symeon survive from late antiquity: ch. 26 of Theodoret's History of the Monks of Syria and Antonius's Life of Symeon. The critical edition of Theodoret's History of the Monks of Syria can be found in P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Molinghen, eds., Histoire des moines de Syrie: "Histoire Philothée," 2 vols., SC 234, 257 (Paris, 1977–79), and an English translation in R. M. Price, AHistory of the Monks of Syria, Cistercian Studies 88 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1985). A preliminary critical edition of Antonius's Life of Symeon is found in Lietzmann and Hilgenfeld, Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites, 20-78, and a translation in Doran, 85-100, 225-29. The Syriac *Life* is the second oldest of the three lives, but the only one written in association with the cult site.
- 8 V, fol. IV, col. I, ln. I-fol. 12r, col. 2, ln. 23; As., 268.I-287.2; Doran, 103-18 (chs. 1-27). B2, fol. 134r, col. 1, ln. 1-fol. 141v, col. 1, In. 22; Gar., 1.1-11.7 (chs. 1-24). The section of B2 is only partially preserved. B₁, fol. 48v, col. 1, ln. 1-fol. 61v, col. 1, ln. 11; Bj., 507.14-527.7; Lent, 111-24. For toponyms in Syria, I follow K.-P. Todt and B. A. Vest, Syria (Syria Prōtē, Syria Deutera, Syria Euphratēsia), 3 vols., DenkWien 438, TIB 15 (Vienna, 2014).
- V, fol. 63r, col. 2, ln. 27–fol. 77r, col. 2, ln. 23; As., 369.22–394.21; Doran, 175-94 (chs. 107-29). The surviving fragments of B2 do not preserve the end portion of the narrative; see instead Gar., 49.4-53.22 (chs. 103–23). B₁, fol. 114v, col. 1, ln. 25–fol. 130v, col. 1, ln. 4; Bj., 616.3-644.13; Lent, 180-98.
- 10 Eight Syriac manuscripts preserve the text partially or in full: V; B1; B2; British Library Add. 12174, fols. 18v–47v (1197 CE); Damascus Pat. 12/17, fols. 52v-71v (twelfth century); British Library Add. 14732, fols. 215r-215v (thirteenth century); Syrian Orthodox

this problem by attempting to establish which manuscript transmits the version closest to the original. The attempt to establish the earliest version of the text is of great importance for scholars seeking to reconstruct historical events or analyze the literary character of the text at its time of composition. Because scholars focused almost exclusively on V and B_I, this debate has been inconclusive for many years. Some scholars advocated for the primacy of V based on the date given in the manuscript (473) and paleographical evidence, while others preferred B_I because of its literary elegance. 11 I contributed to this debate by undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the Syriac manuscript tradition: I concluded not only that V is the earliest version of the text but that it may be the autograph. 12

At the same time, the existence of three early manuscripts offers a second investigative possibility. Recent research by New Testament textual critics has emphasized that certain texts developed rapidly and with such variation that for most of their ancient readers they did not exist in a single, original form. Rather, individual manuscripts represent stages within a text's growth and

Church, Archdiocese of Aleppo 61(m), fols. 107v-127r (1642-58 CE); and Church of the Forty Martyrs, Mardin 271, fols. 123v-208v (pp. 250-420) (20th century). Multiple translations of the Syriac Life of Symeon are preserved in Arabic and Georgian manuscripts. Most of the translations have not been systematically studied, with the excepproduction.¹³ Scholars of "New Philology" in medieval studies underscore the need to look at a manuscript as the product of various historical actors, including patrons, authors, scribes, illuminators, and commentators. 14 For these scholars, the boundary between author and scribe is fluid. As Bernard Cerquiglini states,

That instability of medieval works in the vernacular is a clear illustration of what is particular to both the written manuscript and, more generally, scribal culture. . . . The work copied by hand, manipulated, always open and as good as unfinished, invited intervention, annotation, and commentary. Confronted with an earlier piece of writing, it constructed itself and sustained itself simply with the distance it assumed in relation to the utterance that was its basis. The scribal work was commentary, paraphrase, supplementary meaning, supplementary language, brought to bear upon a letter that was essentially unfinished.15

The production of a manuscript was an interpretive and historically specific act, ensuring the perpetuation of select literary material and reshaping it, whether in physical or in literary form, for future readers.¹⁶

- 13 For an overview of this approach in New Testament studies, see E. J. Epp, "The Multivalence of the Term 'Original Text' in New Testament Textual Criticism," HTR 92.3 (1999): 245-81. D. C. Parker proposes that the gospels are living texts, with their multiplicity of recensions testifying to the interpretive process of preserving Jesus's teachings in both the ancient and modern world; see The Living Text of the Gospels (Cambridge, 1997). B. D. Ehrman and K. Haines-Eitzen explore how, by altering the text on the page, scribes transformed the gospels that they transmitted and consequently exerted authority over future individuals and communities who read them; see Ehrman, The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament (New York, 1993), and Haines-Eitzen, Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature (Oxford, 2000). Scholars of ancient Jewish texts and pseudepigrapha have employed similar approaches.
- 14 The method gained prominence with the publication of The New Philology, a special issue of Speculum (65.1 [1990]), and of B. Cerquiglini's Éloge de la variante: Histoire critique de la philologie (Paris, 1989).
- B. Cerquiglini, In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology, trans. B. Wing (Baltimore, 1999), 34.
- 16 Scholars of Syriac have also made a substantial contribution to the study of manuscripts and reading culture in the late antique

¹¹ Torrey, Lietzmann and Hilgenfeld, and Lent preferred the version of the text recorded in B_I, because of its polish; see C. C. Torrey, "The Letters of Simeon the Stylite," JAOS 20 (1899): 274-76; Lietzmann and Hilgenfeld, Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites, 211-14; Lent, 104-11. Nöldeke and Peeters favored the version preserved in V, because of the manuscript's age; see T. Nöldeke, Compendious Syriac Grammar, trans. J. A. Crichton (London, 1904), xiii; Peeters, Orient et Byzance, 112-18. Although Doran makes a case for the importance of the version preserved in the Vatican manuscript, he argues that the texts preserved in both B1 and V are later recensions and it is impossible to reconstruct the urtext of the life (Doran, 45-51). With the exception of Peeters, none of these scholars note the existence of B₂.

My dissertation gives an analysis of seven of the eight Syriac manuscripts as well as a brief discussion of the Georgian and Arabic manuscripts. I also argue in an article that V is the autograph of the text, using both codicological and epigraphic evidence; see D. Boero, "Symeon and the Making of the Stylite: The Construction of Sanctity in Late Antique Syria" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2015), 137-211, and "The Context of Production of the Vatican Manuscript of the Syriac Life of Symeon the Stylite," Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies 18.2 (2015): 319-59.

This article builds upon these perspectives to shed light on the discursive processes that made up the formation of a hagiographic tradition in late antiquity. The earliest manuscripts of the Syriac Life of Symeon indicate that it was not a stable and established text but the result of an extended process of textual transmission, in which scribes produced manuscripts for and within specific communal contexts.¹⁷ This article evaluates the versions recorded in those manuscripts as the result of the creative interventions of scribes actively engaged in cultic devotion to Symeon. I argue that the authors of V composed a narrative shaped by the concerns of the local residents of Telanissos and by their participation in storytelling traditions at the cult site. The scribe responsible for the recension preserved in B₂ crafted a version of Symeon's life useful for pilgrims not

and medieval Near East. See, for example, M. M. Mango, "Patrons and Scribes Indicated in Syriac Manuscripts, 411 to 800 AD," in XVI. Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress Wien, 4.-9. Oktober 1981, Akten II/4, JÖB 32.4 (Vienna, 1982), 3-12; S. Brock, "The Art of the Scribe," in The Hidden Pearl: The Syrian Orthodox Church and Its Ancient Aramaic Heritage, 3 vols., ed. S. Brock and D. G. K. Taylor (Rome, 2001), 2:243-63; M. P. Penn, "Moving beyond the Palimpsest: Erasure in Syriac Manuscripts," JEChrSt 18.2 (2010): 261-303; J. T. Walker, "Ascetic Literacy: Books and Readers in East-Syrian Monastic Tradition," in Commutatio et Contentio: Studies in the Late Roman, Sasanian, and Early Islamic Near East in Memory of Zeev Rubin, ed. H. Börm and J. Wiesehöfer (Düsseldorf, 2010), 307-45; M. Debié, "Livres et monastères en Syrie-Mésopotamie d'après les sources syriaques," in Le monachisme syriaque, ed. F. Jullien (Paris, 2010), 123-68; K. S. Heal, "Five Kinds of Rewriting: Appropriation, Influence and the Manuscript History of Early Syriac Literature," Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies 15 (2015): 51–65.

Scholars have long recognized that hagiographies often display complex textual traditions, which invited revision and expansion. P. Geary argues that scholars interested in the lives of saints must address both the meaning of hagiographic texts to their producers and "the interrelationships among modes of hagiographic production, the contexts of their production and distribution, and the uses of the texts" ("Saints, Scholars, and Society: The Elusive Goal," in Saints: Studies in Hagiography, ed. S. Sticca [Binghamton, 1996], 20). Because many Syriac manuscripts survive from late antiquity, Syriac hagiography is a fruitful area for pursuing such studies. In addition to the Syriac Life of Symeon, two hagiographical traditions that provide the evidence needed for this sort of inquiry are the Life of the Man of God and the Syriac recensions of the Life of Antony. For the former see R. Doran, trans., Stewards of the Poor: The Man of God, Rabbula, and Hiba in Fifth-Century Edessa, Cistercian Studies 208 (Kalamazoo, MI, 2006), 3-38. For the latter see note 171 below. S. Brock notes several other Syriac hagiographies that are preserved in early manuscripts; see "Saints in Syriac: A Little-Tapped Resource," JEChrSt 16.2 (2008): 181–96.

enmeshed in local cult life. The scribe responsible for the recension preserved in B₁ transformed the saint to make him a monastic father, combining the two previous versions to produce a comprehensive account of Symeon's life. 18 Accordingly, the article is divided into three sections. Each introduces the particular manuscript under examination, briefly identifies the text's place within the manuscript tradition, and analyzes the contents of that text with the help of literary and anthropological models.

Vaticanus Syriacus 160, fols. 1v–79v: The Local Community's Account

The Vatican manuscript closes with a detailed colophon, which introduces the text's authors, date, and additional individuals involved in the process of making the manuscript (fig. 1).19

> משביות החלה שנם אלחז המשונת لعمد وز [مد]ملحه ملدز سلز دزه مرعهم معمد مرمي مرمية مرعمة م [...] תושא במשב , זאו השש הנה خدده معدید، براعه خد در محدده دمه، بهقسم دسمه برمحنه لحتندسم مصمعاء مصقعما مصمم مرعاه مسعد مسعم بدهاه مساه لحدله وحراء محتم معتم والمرام والمرام المرام or where war wald riberts rela מוא באבא נהוא וכוי, שבבה להכוא ביונ נים, ביבבמוא כח ביחק אוכבא מוצה איווט בשבים ארצאבאה אודי אבים האדליבא ביסה, משלוא ס עביא השחול לביצה הבר א בפינ"א האלמא מיי, משישא عصمه وحتوه منصدهم والمه هذر معانه دحل مع دنه بخ عد معانمه

- 18 It is important to note that the scribe responsible for the bulk of revisions found in a particular recension may not be the same scribe responsible for the manuscript at hand. I therefore use the phrase "the scribe responsible for the version preserved in the manuscript under consideration" or similar language. When discussing unnamed scribes, I employ the masculine pronoun because most scribes named in late antique Syriac colophons were male. I also use the singular pronoun for B2 and B1, in the absence of explicit evidence that two or more scribes crafted a manuscript together (as documented in many colophons).
- 19 For catalogue entries, the transcription, and the translations of this version of the text, see note 3.

لاساطة [لام] لام] معده معده المعادة بعد بعلم لاسلس عمدمع وممل [1] لاسم ممحم حمل خے دفتہ محدد سے لم حل خے בשבר סשמי משם מס לשמים שלבה مسد لم حمد مل مدم مه بعده תאשה משל בשל המש האמשיווז مرقب محم مرسح مح مرية عصاء مرمهم العفاء الحنسه حمامه محتديم عمية مومله سليم دمن محمل علم علم

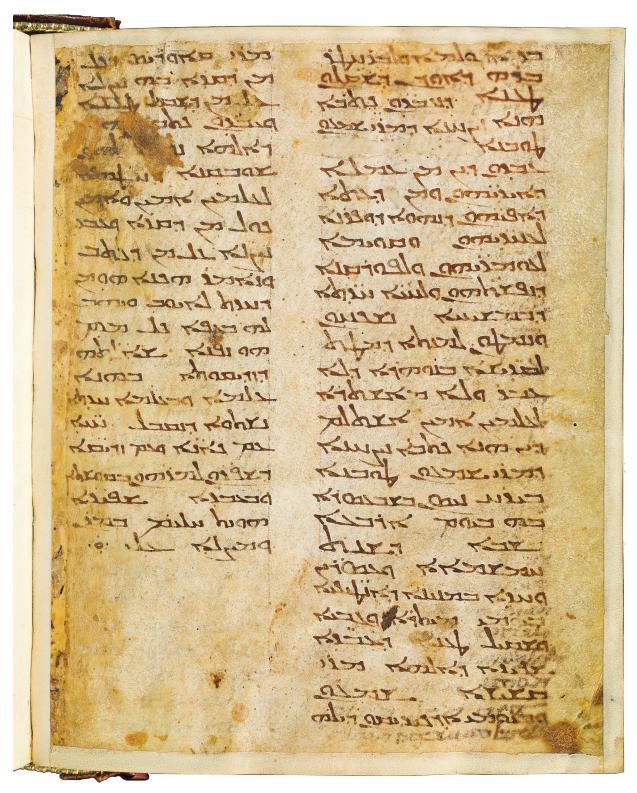
Let this be a good remembrance before God and his Christ for Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar, son of Udan, who undertook to compose this book, "The Heroic Acts of the Blessed Mar Symeon." [. . .] They composed it by the toil of their hands and the sweat of their brows so that it be a remembrance for their departed [relatives], sustenance in their way of life, and redemption for their souls, that they find new life in Christ, and that they gain that portion allotted to the saints in the permanent and inextinguishable bright light forever. Amen. This book, "The Heroic Acts of the Blessed Mar Symeon," was finished on the seventeenth day of the month Nisan, on the fourth day of the week, in the year 521 according to the Antiochene reckoning, in the time of the excellent and eminent doer of God's good deeds, the priest Mar Symeon, and in the time of his archdeacon Mar Cyrus. Let everyone who reads this pray for those who undertook to compose this book that God may grant them forgiveness of sin forever. Amen. Amen. Let everyone who reads and does this pray for the one who wrote it out. Let him speak thus, "May He who revived Job and gave him double of everything answer the request for righteousness in this world and that, in the world to come, he may be worthy to receive life with the just and the righteous who pleased their Lord in truth and good deeds." May you be firm in the Lord, and pray for me.²¹

The colophon names the two people who composed the text, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar, as well as the date of composition, 17 Nisan 521, or 17 April 473.22 The manuscript displays a fifth-century scribal hand, suggesting that the date of composition may also be the date of the manuscript.²³ Thus, this manuscript might in fact be the autograph of the text.²⁴ An autograph is the textual form (or forms, since ancient authors often circulated multiple copies of their work) that left the desk of the original author(s).²⁵ Finally, the colophon mentions an individual responsible for writing out the manuscript (سے کے خل ہے), but it does not name him. This person may be Symeon bar Eupolemos or Bar Hatar, or it may be a scribe who worked with them. Alternatively, it could be that this manuscript is not the autograph but rather a copy of an earlier manuscript: in that case the scribe transcribed the earlier colophon, adding his own request for prayers following the interjection, "Amen. Amen."26 If so, the scribe copied the manuscript very soon after the text's composition, since the handwriting dates to the fifth century. In this article, I treat Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar as

- 22 Previous scholars have called the first author Symeon bar Apollo, but my recent examination of the manuscript revealed that a better interpretation might be Symeon bar Eupolemos ("The Context of Production," 326). Several Syriac colophons dating before the year 1000 attest to pairs of scribes collaborating to copy manuscripts; see J. B. V. Tannous, "Syria between Byzantium and Islam: Making Incommensurables Speak" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2010), 112-20. Here, we see two individuals collaborating to compose a text.
- 23 Wright and Peeters accepted the 473 date: W. Wright, A Short History of Syriac Literature (London, 1894), 56n1; Peeters, Orient et Byzance, 112-14. W. H. P. Hatch also accepted the 473 date, placing the Vatican manuscript as the fifth earliest dated Syriac manuscript; see An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts, Monumenta palaeographica vetera 2 (Boston, 1946), 56, pl. v. Finally, Nöldeke also advocated for the very early date of the manuscript; Compendious Syriac Grammar, xiii (n. 11 above).
- 24 Peeters, Orient et Byzance, 112-18; Boero, "The Context of Production," 327-32.
- For the definition of the term autograph, I follow Epp, who distinguishes between the predecessor text-form, autographic text-form, canonical text-form, and interpretive text-form ("The Multivalence of the Term 'Original Text,'" 276-77). However, I have expanded Epp's definition, replacing "textual form" with "textual form(s)" to allow for the possibility that multiple versions of a text could have left the desk of an author. For an example of this situation, see S. Gurd, "Cicero and Editorial Revision," Classical Antiquity 26.1 (2007): 49-80.
- 26 I thank Jack Tannous for this suggestion.

²⁰ V, fol. 79r, col. 2, ln. 26-fol. 79v, col. 2, ln. 21; As., 398.3-34. Since the manuscript lacks punctuation in the colophon, I have omitted it in my transcription. At fol. 79v, col. 1, ln. 5, the second half of the line has been erased, as indicated by [. . .].

²¹ I have slightly adapted Doran's translation (Doran, 197–98).



 $Fig.\ 1. \quad Vaticanus\ Syriacus\ 160, fol.\ 79v.\ ©\ 2018\ Biblioteca\ Apostolica\ Vaticana.\ Reproduced\ with\ permission\ of$ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

the authors of this text and V as the autograph, although I acknowledge that this manuscript may be a copy of an earlier manuscript.

Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar do not explicitly state the place where they composed their text or the individuals who paid for its production, but, as I have argued in previous scholarship, details provided in the colophon in combination with epigraphic evidence make it possible to locate composition in Telanissos (Tell-Neššē in Syriac, Dayr Sim'ān in Arabic), the village adjacent to Symeon's cult site, and potentially identify the manuscript's patrons (fig. 2).²⁷ In addition to naming the authors, the colophon states that the text was completed in the time of the priest Mar Symeon and his archdeacon Mar Kyrus. Inscriptions associated with a hostel in Telanissos also mention an individual named Symeon. Placed at the beginning of the processional route leading up to the cult site, this hostel was the first major infrastructural project in Telanissos to support pilgrims' travel. For the sake of brevity, I reproduce only one of the four inscriptions associated with this building:28

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ΧΜΓ εγεν τουτο το πανδ εν μ
Πανημω ινδς β του ζκφ ετους \overline{X}ε βοηθι
Συμεωνης
του Μα
ριμης
εποιη
σεν μνησ
   \theta + \eta^{29}
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The inscription states, "Ch(rist) b(orn) (of) M(ary). This inn was (built) in (the) month of Panemos, indiction 2, of the 527th year. O Christ, help (us)! Symeon of Marimēs built it: may he be remembered!"30 The year 527 in the Antiochene calendar corresponds to 479 CE.

- Boero, "The Context of Production," 319-59.
- For other inscriptions, see IGLSyr 2:233-34, nos. 417, 418; G. Tchalenko, Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord: Le Massif du Bélus à l'époque romaine, 3 vols., Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 50 (Paris, 1953–58), 1:206–9, 2: pl. cxliv, lxviii, no. 16; 3:19, no. 16.
- IGLSyr 2:233, no. 416.
- Translation adapted from W. K. Prentice, Greek and Latin Inscriptions, Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria, 1899–1900, vol. 3 (New York, 1908), 135, no. 121. "Marimēs" may refer to Mariamnē, located about 40 kilometers southwest of Ḥamā, or, more likely, Marīmīn on Ğabal az-Zāwiya (Todt and Vest,

The time frame of Symeon's construction of the hostel (471 to 479) thus overlaps perfectly with the completion of this version of the Syriac Life. Although there must have been several individuals named Symeon in fifth-century Telanissos, it is plausible that the Symeon in the inscriptions and the priest Mar Symeon were the same man. A priest would have been in an excellent position to gather and oversee funds for such a building project.31

An inscription from Telanissos also identifies a certain Kyrus:

```
+ εκτεσην Κυρος ......
  Συμεω
                               uoc<sup>32</sup>
  νης
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The fragmentary inscription reads, "Kyrus built . . . Symeon..."33 In north Syrian inscriptions the verb ἔκτισεν regularly indicates patronage or oversight of a building project.³⁴ Unfortunately, W. H. Waddington, who first recorded the inscription in the mid-nineteenth century, did not give sufficient details regarding the inscription's archaeological context.35 Nevertheless, it is clear that Kyrus was responsible for the construction of the building upon which the inscription was originally carved. The inscription also associates Kyrus's building activities with an individual named Symeon. This individual could be the priest Symeon or it could be the saint himself. Either interpretation might link the Kyrus named in this inscription with the Kyrus named in V's colophon.

Syria, 2:1502-4). For additional commentary on the inscription, see Boero, "The Context of Production," 337-40.

Boero, "The Context of Production," 339-45.

IGLSyr 2:236, no. 423.

Translation adapted from Prentice, Greek and Latin Inscriptions, 137, no. 123.

Boero, "The Context of Production," 345-46, 346n78.

Waddington remarks that the inscription was carved upon the lintel of a door, but gives no further discussion of the building's function or location. Prentice, like L. Jalabert and R. Mouterde in vol. 2 of IGLSyr, simply repeats Waddington's description; it is not clear that they saw the inscription during their surveys of Telanissos. See P. Le Bas and W. H. Waddington, Voyage archéologique en Grèce et en Asie Mineure, fait par ordre du gouvernement français pendant les années 1843 et 1844, vol. 3.1 (Paris, 1870), 624, no. 2693; Prentice, Greek and Latin Inscriptions, 137, no. 123; IGLSyr 2:236, no. 423. See also commentary in Boero, "The Context of Production," 345-47.

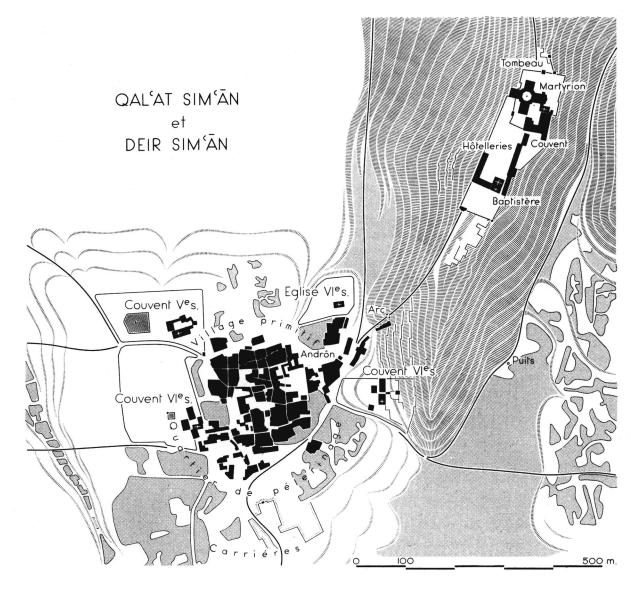


Fig. 2. Plan of the village of Telanissos (Dayr Sim'ān) and cult site (Qal'at Sim'ān) by G. Tchalenko. The hostel in Telanissos is labeled, "Andrôn." Reproduced with permission of P. Geuthner.

The evidence paints a compelling picture of local activities to support cult life in Telanissos in the late fifth century. A certain Symeon and a certain Kyrus were involved in building projects, either in association with each other or both in devotion to the saint. A certain Symeon and Kyrus were also involved with the production of V's version of the Syriac Life. Given the chronological overlap between the construction of the hostel and the completion of the text, it is probable that the individuals named in the inscriptions are the same as those named in the colophon. Indeed, the various expenditures—the production of a manuscript, the construction of the hostel, and perhaps additional local construction—point to a sustained project on the part of the local community to promote and maintain pilgrimage to Telanissos. Whereas the hostel supported pilgrims who visited Symeon's site in Telanissos, the Syriac Life made available the local community's version of the saint's story.³⁶ Owing to the fragmentary and limited nature of the epigraphic evidence, we cannot link the Symeon and

36 Boero, "The Context of Production," 348-50.

Kyrus of the inscriptions with the two individuals in the text with complete certainty, but in my view the signs of the connection between the hostel and the text provide a credible context for the contents of V.

The Vatican manuscript is an outstanding historical document, not only because of its early date and potential close links with Telanissos but also because it plausibly is the autograph of the text. Only a handful of autographs survive from the ancient world. Two Syriac manuscripts from late antiquity bear a close association with their autographs: British Library Add. 14534 and 17126, which contain a commentary by Philoxenos of Hierapolis (Mabbūg in Syriac) on the prologue of John and fragments of his commentaries on Matthew and Luke. It is probable that scribes from Philoxenos's scriptorium produced both manuscripts, as suggested by the scribal hand and the colophon in Add. 17126.37 Papyri also provide about twenty examples of autographs or fragments of autographs, all otherwise unknown in the literary record. Their identification as autographs is based on the nature of their corrections and annotations.³⁸ Most important among the papyrological finds is the personal archive of Dioskoros, a

37 Philoxenos originally composed these commentaries in 505 CE. The colophon of Add. 17126 specifies that the manuscript dates to 511 and was composed in Hierapolis (Mabbūg in Syriac). Add. 14534 lacks a colophon detailing its date or place of production but displays a hand similar to that of Add. 17126. See Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum (n. 2 above), 2:526-27; D. A. Michelson, The Practical Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug (Oxford, 2015), 115-19. Another important Syriac manuscript on this front is Vaticanus Syriacus 162, which contains the Chronicle of Zuqnīn and dates to 775-76. A. Harrak has convincingly argued that Joshua the Stylite was both the copyist-compiler of the first three parts of the chronicle and the author-composer of the fourth part. That the fourth part of the chronicle is an autograph is indicated not only by paleography but also by the material features of the text. Joshua wrote parts 1, 2, and 3 on previously inscribed parchment, while he wrote part 4 on fresh parchment. Part 4 contains blank spaces in the text, perhaps because Joshua wished to add further information later. It also contains two notes intended to help Joshua recall topics about which he wanted to write. See Harrak, The Chronicle of Zuqnīn, Parts III and IV: A.D. 488-775: Translated from Syriac with Notes and Introduction, Mediaeval Sources in Translation 36 (Toronto, 1999), 1-17.

38 T. Dorandi, Le stylet et la tablette: Dans le secret des auteurs antiques (Paris, 2000), 51-60; A. Carlini, "Abbozzo di inno ad Εἰρήνη di un poeta dilettante del sec. I d.C.," in L'antico e la sua eredità: Atti del Colloquio internazionale di studi in onore di Antonio Garzya, Napoli, 20-21 settembre 2002, ed. U. Criscuolo (Naples, 2004), 21-29.

leading man of sixth-century Aphrodito (modern Kom Ishqāw, Egypt), which is composed of public and prid vate documents, such as petitions, depositions, receipts, inventories, and letters, as well as drafts of his poetry. Because the archive contains numerous documents by Dioskoros, scholars are confident that the poems are in fact his own autographs.39

Unlike papyrological examples of autographs, which often display corrections and work-in-progress drafts, V does not exhibit extensive annotations. 40 Consequently, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar may have completed a rough draft at an earlier phase of their work, this manuscript may be one of several copies sent out by the authors, or it may be a closely related copy of Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's original text, as discussed above. In any case, it is clear that Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar made use of a set of earlier sources, which they organized to form a cohesive narrative of Symeon's life. The two authors gathered oral testimony from Symeon's contemporaries. They also consulted written documents preserved at the cult site or elsewhere in the village, such as letters, a short apologia in circulation about the saint, and possibly short miracle collections.⁴¹ This interpretive process

- 39 J.-L. Fournet, Hellénisme dans l'Égypte du VIe siècle: La bibliothèque et l'oeuvre de Dioscore d'Aphrodité, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1999), and L. S. B. MacCoull, Dioscorus of Aphrodito: His Work and His World (Berkeley, 1988).
- 40 In this respect it also contrasts with part 4 of the Chronicle of Zuqnīn. However, part 4 contains far fewer annotations than do papyrological examples (see note 37). Thus, the lack of annotations does not necessarily disprove that V is an autograph.
- Letters: the authors quote the text of a letter that Symeon sent to Emperor Theodosius. It is plausible that Symeon sent such a letter, although it is unlikely that Emperor Theodosius granted his request (Torrey, "The Letters" [n. 11 above], 254-57). Following the conclusion of the Syriac Life of Symeon, the authors include a letter written to Symeon from the priest Kosmas (V, fols. 77r-79r; As., 394-97). Apologia: both Theodoret's History of the Monks of Syria and the Syriac Life include a defense of Symeon's column standing that gives the same list of scriptural examples. There is no other indication that the authors of the Syriac Life referred to Theodoret's text as a source. Thus, the authors of both texts shared a common source, probably some sort of apologia in circulation about the saint (A. J. Festugière, Antioche païenne et chrétienne: Libanius, Chrysostome et les moines de Syrie, Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 194 [Paris, 1959], 354–55; Doran, 57–59). Miracle collections: R. Doran identifies potential groups of miracles that may have circulated prior to the composition of the Vatican manuscript; see "Compositional Comments on the Syriac Versions of the Life of Simeon Stylites," AB 102 (1984): 35-48.

coalesced the mythmaking powers of the local community into a desired scheme and, as a result, crystallized in time and space a set of fluid interpretations of Symeon.⁴² It also participated in a broader tradition of storytelling at the cult site—a tradition that predated the work of the authors, that the authors themselves perpetuated, and, as later sections of this article show, that continued long after the composition of the text of the Vatican manuscript.

As a text that employs at least some oral sources, V stands on the cusp of oral storytelling and written narrative. Given their oral nature, storytelling traditions can be only partially represented in a literary text. For this reason, an analysis of a storytelling tradition as it appears in a written document requires both anthropological and literary methods. 43 In her study of oral accounts of the life and miracles of Padre Cícero Romão Batista (d. 1934) told at his pilgrimage site in Juazeiro do Norte, Brazil, Candace Slater compares stories narrated by local residents with those narrated by pilgrims visiting from other towns. Although the stories of both communities share literary antecedents, narrative structure, and the concept of the miraculous, they generally diverge in their representation of the

42 For discussion of the importance of this moment in the formation of a hagiographic tradition, see T. J. Heffernan, Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages (New York, 1988), 32-35. Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's effort to gather and organize miracles should be seen in dialogue with similar miracle collections at cult sites across the eastern Mediterranean, such as at Thekla's cult site outside of Seleukeia, Symeon the Younger's cult site outside of Antioch, and Artemios's cult site in Constantinople. For this genre of literature, see S. Efthymiadis, "Greek Byzantine Collections of Miracles: A Chronological and Bibliographical Survey," Symbolae Osloenses 74.1 (1999): 195-211, and S. Efthymiadis and V. Déroche, "Greek Hagiography in Late Antiquity (Fourth-Seventh Centuries)," in The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography, vol. 1, Periods and Places, ed. S. Efthymiadis (Farnham, Surrey, 2011), 66-79. For two fruitful analyses of late antique miracle collections, see S. F. Johnson, The Life and Miracles of Thekla: A Literary Study (Washington, DC, 2006), and P. Cox Miller, The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity (Philadelphia, 2009).

43 On oral storytelling and methods for analysis in epic poetry, see A. B. Lord, The Singer of Tales, 2nd ed., ed. S. Mitchell and G. Nagy (Cambridge, 2000); D. F. Reynolds, Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Epic Tradition (Ithaca, NY, 1995); and G. Nagy, Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond (Cambridge, 1996).

holy man and his miracles.⁴⁴ Local residents engage in systematic privatization in their oral accounts, presenting even the most familiar tales as their own memories or as memories held by other community members. In contrast, pilgrims favor the construction of a communally meaningful legend.⁴⁵ Slater's study is, of course, chronologically and geographically distant from fifthand sixth-century Syria. But while her findings do not serve as evidence for the historical setting of the late antique manuscripts of the Syriac Life of Symeon, they do offer a compelling framework for studying the text of the Vatican manuscript as a distinctly local account of Symeon's life and miracles. They also help us understand changes in the textual tradition, as we will see in later sections of this article.

Slater identifies six characteristics that distinguish the tales of local residents as a group: a high degree of personal involvement, concern for concrete detail, focus on the local community associated with the pilgrimage center, lack of ordering principle, narrative variety, and resistance to standardization.⁴⁶ In what follows I address these six characteristics as found in V's version of the Syriac Life. They are narrative strategies familiar in late antiquity, and hagiographers utilize them even when they are removed in time and place from the saint. In this particular case, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar employ these strategies in a context that supports them as being historically legitimate. Yet their efforts do not result in a disinterested representation of the saint. Rather, the authors' insider claims assert the exclusivity of the local community's interpretation of Symeon.

Personal Involvement

As noted at the outset of this article, two narrative sections (Symeon's youth and his early ascetic practice; his death) frame a sizable collection of accounts of Symeon's miracles, visions, and ascetic practices. This middle section offers some of the material most illuminating on how Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar, as well as later scribes, made sense of Symeon's career and, in particular, his unusual choice to stand on a

- 44 C. Slater, Trail of Miracles: Stories from a Pilgrimage in Northeast Brazil (Berkeley, 1986), 103-16.
- Ibid., 4.
- Ibid., 117-32. Whereas Slater combines personal involvement and narrative variety in one category, I have separated them into two distinct categories.

column. As Susan Harvey shows, visions called Symeon to reorder God's creation according to the biblical models of Moses and Elijah. They defined Symeon's mission as champion for the poor, healer of the sick, and patron of the disenfranchised. Inspired by these visions, Symeon was to not only proclaim God's word but also bring it to fruition with ascetic practice and miraculous service. Through his ascetic practice, Symeon defeated desire, human suffering, and the powers of Satan. These victories transformed Symeon's body and soul according to the model of Christ's transfiguration. Through his miracles, Symeon enacted the work of the prophet.⁴⁷

While all three versions retain these literary components, each scribe adapts them for his own literary program. In the case of V, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar privilege their relationship with Symeon as well as the local community's relationship with him, an element often omitted in later manuscripts. Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar explicitly state that they present stories which they themselves had heard from Symeon or from his close associates.⁴⁸ After recalling Symeon's miraculous feeding of local laborers, a miracle modeled after Jesus's feeding of the five thousand, the two authors comment, 2 . 4 , where . resoft any 420 רמאבש הפה היישה (The saint told us these things when he was giving thanks and praising God).⁴⁹

47 S. A. Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite: Perspectives on Simeon the Elder," VChr 42 (1988): 381-86. Harvey, writing before Doran had published his translation of V, bases her analysis on the B_I recension, but her analysis of the text's central thematic issues holds strong for all three late antique versions.

48 Slater notes that in many stories about Padre Cícero, the storyteller recounts his or her own miraculous contact with the saint and thus plays a leading role in the narrative (Trail of Miracles, 118-22).

V, fol. 7r, col. 2, lns. 5-8; As., 277.8-10; translation adapted from Doran, 110-11. The first-person plural reference is removed from this passage in B_2 and B_1 (B_2 , fol. 137r, col. 2, lns. 13-21; B_1 , fol. 55r, col. 2, lns. 2–12; Bj., 517.20–518.2; Lent, 117). In a second case the authors of V use the first-person plural pronoun and verbal conjugation, but the versions preserved in B_I and G omit them (V: V, fol. 24r, col. 1, lns. 11-15; As., 305.37-39; Doran, 131; B₁: B₁, fol. 91v, col. 2, lns. 16-17; Bj., 577.17; Lent, 155; G: Gar., 32.20-27). Nevertheless, the first person is not uniformly extracted from later versions. For example, in the following passage, V and B_I retain the first person, but G omits the entire passage (V: V, fol. 37v, col. 1, ln. 13; As., 326.24; Doran, 145; B_I: B_I, fol. 103r, col. 2, ln. 19; Bj., 595.19; Lent, 167; G: Gar., 41). For other first-person references in the Vatican manuscript, see V, fol. 37r, col. 1, ln. 12; fol. 67v, col. 2, ln. 28-fol. 68r, col. 1, ln. 1. Despite referring to themselves in the first person throughout their In this short but important assertion, the authors link their written words with the spoken words of the saint.

Similarly, they highlight that they collected reports from Symeon's companions:

ספק מתנק שוֹ, ונווֹש נפשח בים ספלא مصل معند ما جه مخبره معمل حام معمده ما تعالى من المخاره منفع شبه حسنه می مصری می حفرم אמן בי או היא בוכא לשבוא בי אה האמלה. תמה דומם ולשמ בז תמה שות אשת אפה שיאם אים אים אים אים אים לאים לאים רשאבח השאו כאמל בם מששו המה ליםו עשם ארידם אום אטעי שים לים לים לים לים ما منه بهت منات منه ما موم بهت منع مات عية شر دسره مح حذف تر المام، ومحيم אנה הלם הים ומשא לבי היא המא לבי היא היא אשבע ל מיבא איר יעים איל אינים שאים שביר

From that time, he began to train himself with fasting and prayer. He was in the church by himself day and night, the first to enter and the last to leave. Most days he remained there all night until morning in prayer. There was a day when he knelt from evening until morning. There was another day when he extended (his hands) in prayer from evening until morning. After he had been acting this way for a great while, his peers began watching him to see if he moved his feet or changed his position from evening to morning. Nobody was able (to detect) this, as they told us.⁵¹

The authors draw the reader closer to Symeon by painting a detailed picture of his ascetic training as a youth. They heighten the intimacy as well as the reliability of the account by explicitly citing firsthand witnesses, thereby inviting the readers to see Symeon's prayer life through the eyes of his peers. Both strategies—the authors' claim to relay the saint's words and the accounts of eyewitnesses—enforce the intrinsic truth-value of the story. These strategies also position Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar as touched by

account, the authors of the Syriac Life do not describe a specific miracle that they experienced at the hands of the saint.

V, fol. 6r, col. 1, ln. 1-col. 2, ln. 3; As., 275.1-18.

Translation adapted from Doran, 109.

their personal encounters with the saint and profiting indirectly from his presence through eyewitnesses. By reading the firsthand accounts provided in the Syriac Life, the audience member also participates in the sanctity of the saint. 52 He becomes another link in a chain that stretches back to the saint himself.⁵³

In addition, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar underscore that they present previously unknown details of Symeon's prayers and visions by emphasizing the secrecy associated with Symeon's ascetic practices. Symeon prayed in secret, battled Satan in secret, and endured physical hardship in secret.⁵⁴ The stress on secrecy is particularly poignant because Symeon's prayer life upon the column was extraordinarily public. Perched upon a column located on a hilltop, Symeon was easily seen for some distance from the surrounding landscape.⁵⁵ The authors take a publicly known activity, Symeon's prayer life, but consider its meaning not to be exhausted by public definition. They present their narrative as uniquely able to convey the true meaning of Symeon's ascetic life.⁵⁶

- 52 C. Rapp, "Storytelling as Spiritual Communication in Early Greek Hagiography: The Use of Diegesis," JEChrSt 6.3 (1998): 432, 440-41.
- 53 On constructing a chain of information stretching back to the subject, see P. Turner, "Methodology, Authority, and Spontaneity: Sources of Spiritual Truthfulness in Late Antique Texts and Life," in An Age of Saints? Power, Conflict, and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity, ed. P. Sarris, M. Dal Santo, and P. Booth (Leiden, 2011), 16-17. This technique confronted concerns about factual accuracy that a careful reader might raise.
- 54 Secret prayer and battles with Satan: V, fol. 13r, col. 2, ln. 10; As., 289.5; Doran, 119. The emphasis on secrecy is omitted from B2, fol. 142r, col. 2, ln. 22, but retained in B_I, fol. 62v, col. 1, ln. 23; Bj., 529.4; Lent, 125. Secret physical hardship: V, fol. 22v, col. 1, ln. 12-fol. 23v, col. 1, ln. 20; As., 303.33-305.15; Doran, 130-31. In this case, B_I does mention that some of Symeon's hardships were known only to the disciples, but it omits several other references to secrecy (B₁, fol. 90v, col. 1, ln. 10-fol. 91v, col. 1, ln. 14; Bj., 575.20-577.8; Lent, 154-55). The entire passage is dropped from G (Gar., 31–32).
- 55 Symeon stood upon multiple columns during his life. Archaeological remains and textual evidence suggest that taken together, the column shaft and base of the tallest reached about 17 to 19 meters in height. The columns of stylites could be seen from a distance of at least 1 to 2 kilometers. See Doran, 16-17; L. A. Schachner, "The Archaeology of the Stylite," in Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity, ed. D. M. Gwynn and S. Bangert (Leiden, 2010), 341, 379-80.
- 56 E. A. Tiryakian notes that an emphasis on the limitations of public knowledge is a regular feature of esoteric culture and the sociology of secrecy; "Toward the Sociology of Esoteric Culture," American Journal of Sociology 78.3 (1972): 501.

Similarly, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar reveal visions to which only Symeon's closest associates had previously been privy. As noted above, Symeon's visions defined his prophetic calling. His visions of Moses and Elijah are among the most important, because they place him in a line of prophets who bring divine justice to worldly affairs. The authors couch these visions in language of secrecy. Before recounting Symeon's inaugural encounters with Moses and Elijah, they warn the reader:

مام بعد مالد المالا و من بدون م case, is kenon keen of kenon אמעום. אוע ונעלבא בלבחם אם נאמיו سمن لم معدد سعد من بعن بلد اسن תאחשה השם בות השתו לשום תמה לב אוני נשבו ואי ובשחבתוא אילו לתי הששו אם עד הנושה אנב הניצא בלהה, حدم دمانة مع معمسلام مطل سلم سحمل אבאת השוא העול ס תוחה בש אבאה من حاح مومة بعمعم مرسد حاحل مام הסא המסג בו מפטג הסף למס ביותאם הסף عام محماء بقمشت مع ماع ملا مل נוט המשבעה משבעה משבעה למ. אלים المرامة المرامة المحمدة ما معلما معلم المرامة

Now about the visions and revelation shown to the pious and holy Mar Symeon by God through the Holy Spirit. No one can describe or narrate them. Truly, he was very circumspect and was afraid to recount them before people lest someone would either think he spoke boastfully and suffer loss, or strongly give credence to them and think him more than what he was. For this reason, he restrained himself from recounting visions and revelations that he saw to those who served him. He sometimes revealed them and made them known, but he commanded that they not divulge or tell anyone during his life, lest someone think that those who served him praised him overzealously. Furthermore, he did not tell everyone

⁵⁷ V, fol. 18r, col. 2, ln. 7–fol. 18v, col. 1, ln. 16; As., 297.17–298.1. B_I and G contain a shortened form of this passage (B1: B1, fol. 87r, col. 1, ln. 10-col. 2, ln. 3; Bj., 570.17-571.2; Lent, 151; G: Gar., 30.10-16).

who served him, but only those whom he loved and trusted.58

According to this and similar passages, Symeon disclosed his visions only to the most trusted and beloved of his disciples.⁵⁹ He gave explicit instructions not to repeat these visions until after he had passed away. The authors stress Symeon's guardedness at least partially in defense of the saint. In his day Symeon had a reputation for vainglory, and certainly the authors saw it as their task to combat such rumors.⁶⁰ Even so, their emphasis on the fact that a small and special group possessed secret knowledge to be revealed only following Symeon's death again presents the narrative of the Syriac *Life* as offering privileged insight into Symeon's deeds—insight possessed only by the local community.⁶¹

After enigmatically referring to themselves in first-person statements throughout the text, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar close with a colophon

- Translation adapted from Doran, 125. The first line ("Now about the visions . . . ") serves as the title of the section.
- For a similar plea by Symeon to keep his visions a secret until after his death, see V, fol. 48v, col. 1, ln. 13-fol. 49r, col. 2, ln. 1; As., 343.6-344.7; Doran, 157-58. This admonition is retained in B₁, fol. 114r, col. 1, ln. 15-fol. 114v, col. 1, ln. 24; Bj., 615.1-616.2; Lent, 179-80; it is truncated in G (Gar., 47.25-36). This section of B₂ survives but is illegible at points due to damage to the manuscript (B₂, fol. 151v, col. 1, ln. 8-col. 2, ln. 14).
- 60 According to the Life of Daniel the Stylite (ch. 7.16), monks from Samosata in Mesopotamia contended that Symeon's column standing was only a vainglorious proceeding; H. Delehaye, ed., Les saints stylites, SubsHag 14 (Brussels, 1923), 7-8; E. Dawes and N. H. Baynes, trans., Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon, and St. John the Almsgiver, 2nd ed. (1977; reprint, Crestwood, NY, 1996), 10. According to the Epitome of John Diakrinomenos's lost Ecclesiastical History (bk. 5), monks from Egypt found fault with Symeon's column standing and refused to be in communion with him. See G. C. Hansen, ed., Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte, GCS (Berlin, 1971), 153-54, frags. 534-37; translation in Price, A History of the Monks of Syria (n. 7 above), 174n16.
- 61 Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's emphasis on secrecy echoes the Gospel according to Mark, and the echo was probably intentional; the two authors no doubt knew the Gospels well. There Jesus bars the disciples from disclosing his identity (3:12) and explains parables in private (4:33-34). Following the transfiguration, Jesus forbids the disciples from recounting the event until after the resurrection (9:9). These demands for secrecy emphasize the revelatory nature of the gospel. In my view, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar draw on these aspects of Mark in order to set apart their story as newly revealed and to define a limited set of disciples empowered by their teacher.

in which they at long last reveal their own names as well as the names of the priest Symeon and the archdeacon Kyrus, who may have paid for the manuscript's production.⁶² The choice to disclose personal identities makes tangible the first-person references throughout the narrative. 63 The authors become actors within the text. In addition, the colophon provides an opportunity for the authors to frame their task of writing a hagiography as a performance of penance. The composition of the book secures remembrance for their departed relatives, redemption for their own souls, and prayers from future readers.⁶⁴ The act of writing (and reading, as we will see later) invites the redemptive powers of the saint. In these ways, the colophon positions Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar as model participants in Symeon's cult.65

Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar highlight that they report the words of Symeon, record the stories of fellow eyewitnesses, and divulge secret ascetic practices and visions. This previously restricted knowledge is made publicly available for the first time in the composition of the Syriac Life. As sociologists note, discourses of secrecy are strategies for accumulating social capital. By presenting select knowledge as secret, its possessors create an aura of prestige around and enhance desire

- The colophon from V is not copied in later manuscripts. Only this manuscript gives Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's names.
- Syriac scribes regularly identify contemporary church or monastic leadership in association with the production, purchase, and use of manuscripts. In doing so, they assert a specific institutional affiliation and matrix of social relationships. For sample colophons disclosing such details, see S. P. Brock, "Manuscripts Copied in Edessa," in Orientalia Christiana: Festschrift für Hubert Kaufhold zum 70. Geburtstag, ed. P. Bruns and H. O. Luthe (Wiesbaden, 2013), 109-27. For a case study using colophons to address social history, see H. L. Murre-van den Berg, "Generous Devotion: Women in the Church of the East between 1550 and 1850," Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies 7.1 (2004): 11-54.
- 64 Early Syriac colophons frequently include prayer formulae in which the scribe seeks forgiveness and divine reward. See S. Brock, "Fashions in Early Syriac Colophons," Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies 18.2 (2015): 364-65.
- Greek hagiographies from late antiquity often contain a preface in which the author identifies himself and reflects on his role: he explains that he writes the text in order to record the memory of the saint for posterity and often claims to have benefited from the saint's miraculous powers, thereby representing himself as the prototype of the saint's clientele. See Rapp, "Storytelling as Spiritual Communication," 432; D. Krueger, Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East (Philadelphia, 2004), 9.

for that knowledge.⁶⁶ This narrative strategy promotes the authors and the closely related cult community as authorized storytellers. It also invites the readers to become possessors of their knowledge, initiating those readers into the perspectives of a devotional community centered on Symeon.

Concern for Concrete Detail and Focus on Telanissos

Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar privatize their version of the text by adding concrete details to their stories, details that are often associated closely with the village of Telanissos and neighboring villages.⁶⁷ They disclose the names of local leaders: The itinerant inspector Mar Bas mentored Symeon.⁶⁸ The priest Daniel gave Symeon a plot of land on which to build his enclosure. 69 The chief Mar Maris stored a vessel of oil blessed by Symeon in his house to share with those in need.⁷⁰ Similarly, the authors maintain precision in regard to place, identifying the names of specific neighboring villages, such as Bayt Lāhā and Šīḥ.⁷¹ They also make exact, albeit unsystematic, references to the physical environment of the cult site. The enclosure included walls, a Eucharistic niche, and a door.⁷² The arrangement of the space changed several times during Symeon's life, as walls were pulled down and various

- 66 G. Simmel, "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies," American Journal of Sociology 11.4 (1906): 441-98; E. Tiryakian, "Toward the Sociology of Esoteric Culture," 491-512; R. F. Campany, Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China (Honolulu, 2009), 88-128.
- I count among these concrete details specific names, places, and events included in the text and physical descriptions of the saint points drawn from Slater. Slater also discusses the concern for inconsequential detail, the use of specific tenses of verbs to heighten a sense of immediacy, and the attempt to situate supernatural details in familiar frames; see Trail of Miracles (n. 44 above), 122-26.
- V, fol. 12r, col. 2, ln. 25; As., 287.4; Doran, 118.
- V, fol. 12v, col. 2, lns. 11-17; As., 288.1-5; Doran, 118.
- V, fol. 12v, col. 2, ln. 17-fol. 13r, col. 2, ln. 9; As., 288.6-289.4; Doran, 118-19.
- Bayt Lāhā: V, fol. 14r, col. 1, ln. 2; As., 290.17; Doran, 120. See also Todt and Vest, Syria, 2:998. Šīḥ: V, fol. 15v, col. 1, ln. 27; As., 293.15; Doran, 122. See also J.-L. Biscop and J.-P. Sodini, "L'accès Nord au domaine de Syméon le stylite: Le village de Shih (Sheikh ed Deir-Shader, Bardakhan)," in Sur les pas des Araméens chrétiens: Mélanges offerts à Alain Desreumaux, ed. F. Briquel-Chatonnet and M. Debié (Paris, 2010), 259-68, and Todt and Vest, Syria, 2:1741.
- 72 Walls and door: V, fol. 58v, col. 2, ln. 20-fol. 59r, col. 2, ln. 27; As., 360.24-361.25; Doran, 169-70. Eucharistic niche: V, fol. 60v, col. 1, ln. 10-fol. 61r, col. 1, ln. 1; As., 363.35-364.28; Doran, 171-72.

columns were constructed.⁷³ Finally, the authors concentrate on situations of concern to residents: Symeon protected Telanissos by ending droughts, warding off rodents that were threatening crops, and confronting unjust administrators.⁷⁴

Prior to the use of epigraphic evidence, scholars associated the composition of the Syriac Life with Telanissos by pointing to the text's precise references to geography, village leadership, and local politics.⁷⁵ These same features, especially the concern for local politics, also attracted the attention of Peter Brown, who argued that as a class of small, independent farmers superseded large landowners in northern Syria, they sought out new patrons to navigate the internal workings of village life.⁷⁶ Certainly Symeon played an economic role in village life, but it is also worth noting that Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar made a distinct choice to emphasize these elements of his career.⁷⁷ This

- 73 Pulling down of walls: V, fol. 20v, col. 2, lns. 14-15, and fol. 48v, col. 1, lns. 20-22; As., 301.17-18, 343.10-12; Doran, 128, 157. Construction of columns: V, fol. 67v, col. 2, ln. 25-fol. 69r, col. 1, ln. 16; As., 376.31-378.27; Doran, 181-83. Archaeologists have confirmed the existence of two different columns: the column now located at the center of the cruciform basilica as well as an earlier column located in the court between the basilica's south and east arms. To the west of the earlier column, they have identified the remains of a rudimentary structure that was probably part of the sanctuary surrounding the column during Symeon's life. See J.-L. Biscop, "Le sanctuaire et le village des pèlerins à Saint-Syméon-le-Stylite (Syrie du Nord): Nouvelles recherches, nouvelles methods," CRAI 153.4 (2009): 1424–30 and figs. 3–5.
- 74 Ending droughts: V, fol. 46v, col. 2, ln. 1-fol. 48v, col. 1, ln. 13; As., 339.31-343.6; Doran, 155-57. Warding off rodents: V, fol. 32v, col. 2, ln. 3–fol. 33r, col. 2, ln. 14; As., 318.24–319.29; Doran, 140–41. Confronting administrators: V, fol. 29r, col. 2, ln. 14-fol. 29v, col. 2, ln. 16; As., 313.16-314.4; Doran, 137.
- Peeters, Orient et Byzance (n. 5 above), 114; Delehaye, Les saints stylites (n. 60 above), viii.
- 76 P. Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," JRS 61 (1971): 85-86. For more recent work on the holy man, patronage, and local politics, see C. Grey, Constructing Communities in the Late Roman Countryside (Cambridge, 2011),
- For critiques of Brown's article and a call to studying hagiographies as discursive texts, see A. Cameron, "On Defining the Holy Man," in The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown, ed. J. Howard-Johnston and P. A. Hayward (Oxford, 1999), 27-43, and S. Elm, "Introduction," JEChrSt 6.3 (1998): 343-51. Since publishing his article, Brown has refined his ideas pertaining to the "Holy Man." See, for example, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, 1971-1997," JEChrSt 6.3 (1998): 353-76.

representation enmeshes Symeon in local relationships and embeds him and his miracles in the surrounding landscape. It privileges the experience of the local community and emphasizes the authors' familiarity with Symeon and his deeds.

Consistent with this representation, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar personalize their presentation of Symeon by incorporating physical descriptions.⁷⁸ They offer the reader a level of intimacy not available to most pilgrims, who, upon their visit to the cult site, gazed on the saint from the base of the column or who, following his death, could not see him at all.⁷⁹ They claim for the local community the privilege of regular, corporeal contact with the saint. Thus, the authors introduce Symeon by noting that he was handsome, a fast runner, strong, and on the short side.80 In their account of his tonsure by Mara, bishop of Gabbula, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar record: 200 سيرة والمحاسبة المرام المحاسبة אמים עדשע שיש ביז עטש עניברו בשימאנים ושאי מיברוקעי מבחיל של שהיא נישהי MOD KOI KLK מבו א בכת (When he saw how becoming his face was and how fair his features were, he marveled and was amazed. For the saint was small in stature but his faith was great. He was ruddy, handsome, and the Lord was with him).81 The authors employ biblical typology, assimilating Symeon's ruddy appearance to David's.82 Similarly, at the height of Symeon's ascetic victory, the miraculous healing of his rotting leg, the authors specify that ious ones is weaker ones which ,شمقر (his body grew strong, his presence was radiant, and his face shone).83 Symeon's physical appearance attests to his holiness. Throughout the text, when his closest associates ascended the column they found him shining with radiance. The Syriac Life is a story of Symeon's ongoing transformation from physical squalor to perfection as God's beloved.⁸⁴ This twopronged strategy—the emphasis on Symeon's physical appearance and its confirmation of his sanctity—again establishes the authors as offering closely held knowledge of the saint.

Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar evince a deep concern for Symeon and his place in village society. They localize the account by highlighting Telanissos's people, places, and events. They make Symeon an advocate for the poor, avenger of injustice, and arbitrator of local conflicts. They also emphasize elements of contact with Symeon in which local residents were far more likely than pilgrims to engage, most prominently the visual aspect of his person. Of course, the authors praise Symeon's deeds that reached far beyond village life: cures offered to pilgrims from afar, protection provided to distant towns and ships at sea, even intercession on behalf of Persian Christians. Even so, a local perspective shapes the story, as demonstrated by the authors' concern for concrete detail, their focus on Telanissos, and, as we will see in the next section, the order of the narrative.

Ordering Principle

The order of Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar's text resists chronological interpretation and has long perplexed scholars. (Table 1 in the appendix gives an overview of the order of V; in this section I employ chapter numbers so that readers can easily refer to it.) Two of the most problematic sections are chapters 89-92 and 93–106. Chapters 89–92 contain miracles experienced by local recipients: Symeon healed a mentally ill boy from Aleppo, cured the bladder stones of a local youth, and saved a local boy from a snake.85 In terms of chronology, these miracles fit nicely with chapters 33-39, in which Symeon heals local supplicants from Bayt Lāhā, the plain of Antioch, and Aleppo. They also mesh neatly in terms of content, since in both sets of miracles Symeon summons his supplicants to use dust for healing purposes, rather than water or *ḥnānā* as occurs

⁷⁸ On such use of physical description, see Slater, Trail of Miracles,

⁷⁹ For the importance of seeing the holy man on pilgrimage, see G. Frank, The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity (Berkeley, 2000).

⁸⁰ V, fol. 1v, col. 2, ln. 15-fol. 2r, col. 1, ln. 10; As., 269.14-23;

⁸¹ V, fol. 7v, col. 2, lns. 4-14; As., 278.1-6; translation adapted from Doran, 111.

¹ Sam. 16:12; Doran, 111n46.

⁸³ V, fol. 26v, col. 1, lns. 7-9; As., 309.11-13; translation adapted from Doran, 134.

⁸⁴ Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite" (n. 47 above), 384.

V, fol. 57v, col. 1, ln. 6-fol. 58v, col. 2, ln. 20; As., 358.17-360.23; Doran, 168-69. A series of dots in black and reddish-black ink divides chapters 88 and 89 in the manuscript, perhaps signaling a break between groups of miracles.

elsewhere in the text. 86 To the discerning reader, it feels as if these two sets of miracles were once contained in a single cycle, which Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar broke apart.⁸⁷ Even if these were not originally grouped in an earlier source with which the authors worked, the question remains, Why separate two sets of miracles (chs. 89-92 and 33-39) so closely related in their chronology and content?

The placement of chapters 93–106 raises a similar problem. This section narrates a period of seclusion, which Symeon presumably undertook before he ascended his column. Symeon shut himself in his enclosure with only a pint and a half of water and a peck and a half of lentils. After a year and a half had passed, the itinerant inspector Mar Bas opened the door of Symeon's enclosure and administered the Eucharist, only to find the water and lentils miraculously intact. These chapters also recount the death of Symeon's brother.88 The section is closely related in its content and chronology to chapters 28-32, in which Symeon shut himself in an empty room for shorter periods and was similarly mentored by Mar Bas.89 Again, why separate two closely related accounts of Symeon's early ascetic career?

These questions plagued medieval scribes and continue to plague modern scholars. Scribes of later manuscripts, including B₁ and B₂, united these miracles and ascetic accounts, placing them early in Symeon's ascetic career. Persuaded in part by the tidy chronological organization of later manuscripts, in particular B_I, the early twentieth-century commentators Hans Lietzmann and Frederick Lent rejected the priority of the text of the Vatican manuscript.90 Even Paul Peeters, who argued that the Vatican manuscript was the autograph, was disturbed by the order of the text. He asserted that a bookbinder had grouped the manuscript's quires and folios haphazardly and the manuscript merited further

86 V, fol. 14r, col. 1, ln. 1-fol. 18r, col. 2, ln. 7; As., 290.16-297.16; Doran, 120-25. An important exception is chapter 38, in which *ḥnānā*—a paste substance mixed from dust, water, and oil produced at the cult site—is used for healing.

- 87 Doran, "Compositional Comments" (n. 41 above), 41–43.
- 88 V, fol. 58v, col. 2, ln. 20-fol. 63r, col. 2, ln. 27; As., 360.24-369.21; Doran, 169-75.
- 89 V, fol. 12r, col. 2, ln. 24–fol. 13v, col. 2, ln. 28; As., 287.3–290.15;
- 90 Lietzmann and Hilgenfeld, Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites (n. 4 above), 211-14; Lent, 104-9.

study so that the original order could be reconstructed.⁹¹ However, a close inspection of the manuscript reveals that the folios are ordered correctly and need not be rearranged. Thus the question remains, How are we to account for the particular order of the Vatican text?

Slater's analysis of local residents' tales about Padre Cícero offers some insight into this problem. In many cases, she recorded a resident recounting multiple stories about Padre Cícero in a single sitting. Sometimes, they narrated more than fifty tales back to back. Residents found it difficult to fuse large quantities of miracle accounts into a cohesive narrative, while their regular engagement with the saint obviated any desire to recount stories in a chronological framework. Accordingly, they stressed telling a large number of stories over drawing causal relationships between individual stories. 92 As Slater puts it, "If the person who knows a hundred miracle narratives has a hundred different ways of affirming Padre Cícero's power, the one who can recount ninety-nine enjoys a less privileged relationship to the priest. For this reason, few residents will risk diminishing their store of tales by implying that one incident is of more interest than another."93 This dynamic sheds light on the Syriac Life's insubstantial chronological development. Like the authors of many early Byzantine miracle collections, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar prefer the repeated demonstration of the sacred in human form to causal relationships between stories.94

Moreover, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar make statements indicating that their approach to the text's structure was intentional. After the close of Symeon's first vision, the authors declare, معمد محمد מומא העוא כלי, שבים מנה אב אלא מוכשאל שליא מזיער אַסשַׁז (Now, as we narrated the first vision which Mar Symeon saw, so this is the first sign

- Peeters, Orient et Byzance (n. 5 above), 113.
- 92 Slater, *Trail of Miracles* (n. 44 above), 118–19, 128–30.
- 94 As Cox Miller succinctly states, "saintly bodies were corporeal objects that demanded a strong form of imagination in order to make their spirited presence intelligible in human life" (The Corporeal Imagination [n. 42 above], 102). This case is supported by the heavy emphasis on miracles. Similarly, Johnson sees the fifth-century miracle collection appended to the Acts of Thekla as employing a "paratactic" structure: that is, miracles are strung together without links in narrative or chronology (The Life and Miracles of Thekla [n. 42 above], 11).

which he wrought).95 Similarly, when Symeon made a vessel of oil belonging to one of the village chiefs overflow, the two authors testify that אמר, הַ מּאָר יה, מּאָר יה מיינים מייני مدهده درهمه دمده در بهدم مدر عدم کلیده ج مجم جہ (this was the first sign wrought by the blessed Mar Symeon in public after he left the monastery). 96 Thus, one must take seriously the order of the narrative. Furthermore, as Robert Doran has correctly noted, there were multiple ways of presenting a saint's life in late antiquity; chronology need not determine the order.⁹⁷

If we look more closely at the placement of chapters 89-92 and 93-106, we see that the order of the text in the Vatican manuscript emphasizes the importance of Symeon's local miracles and mentorship. As previously noted, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's version of the Syriac Life can be divided into three general sections: (1) his early life and entry into Telanissos (chs. 1–27); (2) clusters of miracles, visions, and descriptions of Symeon's ascetic practices (chs. 28–106); and (3) final praise for Symeon, discussion of his ascent to the column, and his death (chs. 107-29).98 An inspection of the second section (chs. 28-106) reveals that the two scribes bookend it with miracles and descriptions of ascetic practices specific to Telanissos. Thus, they begin by describing Symeon's period of seclusion under the mentorship of the itinerant inspector Mar Bas (chs. 28–32). Next, Symeon heals local supplicants from Bayt Lāhā, the plain of Antioch, and Aleppo, as well as other local residents (chs. 33-39). Symeon's visions, descriptions of his ascetic practices, and various miracles follow (chs. 40-88). These miracles include Symeon's interventions into regional political affairs (chs. 56–60), interventions into natural events such as drought and infestation (chs. 61-64, 74-76), and the healing of long-distance pilgrims and miracles that took place away from Telanissos (chs. 65-73, 77-88). The authors then return to Symeon's local miracles (chs. 89-92) and his year-and-a-half-long seclusion under the mentorship of the itinerant inspector Mar Bas (chs. 93-104), the two allegedly errant sections noted above. The section culminates in the final severing of Symeon's worldly ties—that is, the death of his brother (chs. 105-6)—which provides an effective transition to Symeon's ascent of the column. Without question the authors emphasize Symeon's international acclaim, but by starting and finishing this section with Symeon's local miracles and mentorship, they privilege the experiences of Telanissos's community.

A second peculiarity in the structure of the text is the delayed discussion of the column. The authors occasionally mention Symeon's column—they never deny its existence or importance—but they provide no narrative about or explanation for this element of Symeon's ministry until immediately before Symeon's death (chs. 107-13). Doran addresses this problem by proposing that V functions as an apologia for the saint. The authors place at the fore visions, miracles, and ascetic practices as proof that Symeon fulfilled a prophetic calling. Only after they establish his spiritual authority do they turn to the column.99 In using a nonchronological organization, they defend the saint against his detractors, while also offering a particular interpretation of Symeon's sanctity. It is almost never clear whether Symeon generates miracles from the height of his column or the depth of his enclosure. The ascent to a column does not mark a transformational moment in Symeon's life. Rather, every ascetic accomplishment—be it seclusion, fasting, battles with demons, or the decay and healing of his body—results in transformation. The narrative is a story of Symeon's constant fulfillment of God's purpose, even as a young shepherd unknowingly offering incense to God. 100

By eschewing chronological structure, the authors instead present Symeon's deeds in a way that prioritizes Symeon's relationship with the local community. Rather than imposing the framework of human time on Symeon's life, they assume that God's grace on earth is continuously fulfilled through the saint. Symeon's

⁹⁵ V, fol. 4v, col. 1, ln. 25-col. 2, ln. 4; As., 273.5-7; Doran, 107. I have reproduced the punctuation in the manuscript, but the dot between and ard is puzzling. The manuscript often uses an idiosyncratic dotting system, both in punctuation and in other dotting choices. Given this manuscript's early date, its dotting system deserves study in its own right. For a first step in this direction, see G. A. Kiraz, The Syriac Dot: A Short History (Piscataway, NJ, 2015): Kiraz regularly comments on V.

⁹⁶ V, fol. 13r, col. 2, lns. 5-9; As., 289.1-4; Doran, 119. Again, the dot between אהר and מתשאה is puzzling; I have reproduced the manuscript's punctuation.

Doran, "Compositional Comments," 36.

See n. 8 and 9.

Doran, "Compositional Comments," 45-48.

Symeon's time as a shepherd: V, fol. IV, col. I, ln. I-col. 2, ln. 15; As., 68.1-69.14; Doran, 103-4.

powers have the potential to reach to the end of the earth; but by bookending the central section of the text with Symeon's local miracles and mentorship, the authors embed the saint in the fabric of village life.

Narrative Variety and Resistance to Standardization

The high degree of personal involvement, concern for concrete details, focus on the local community, and ordering principle demonstrate Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's local interests. These features of the Syriac Life align nicely with Slater's analysis of storytelling practices by local residents. There are, however, substantial differences between a corpus of oral accounts of a holy man and a written account. Not all of Slater's characteristics map neatly onto the Syriac *Life of Symeon*; specifically, the text does not display narrative variety and lack of standardization. A central component of Slater's definition of narrative variety is that the corpus is decidedly open-ended. As one of Slater's storytellers stated, "No one knows the whole story of my Padrinho. . . . The cases are innumerable, each one more extraordinary than the next."101 But V is clearly not open-ended. The act of recording a text necessarily limits a corpus by including, excluding, and crystallizing material in written form. Standardization is similarly affected by the form. In Slater's corpus, storytellers insist on their own version of a given story. They do not see any purpose in telling a story in the same way as another storyteller. Consequently, their storytelling practices resist standardization. 102 A written text, in contrast, lacks the variety embodied in an oral tradition. In writing the Syriac *Life*, the authors impress structure onto a fluid tradition. 103

Still, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar can fruitfully be considered part of a storytelling tradition that precedes them and that they expect to continue following in the composition of their text. Despite the considerable quantity of miracles included in the text, the authors portray themselves as narrating for the reader only a few of Symeon's great victories: תבאבי הת שבים הובים חשו זיך ביור

طبعه و محل بن احد الما الحدمة المحديد. masas where who maked whomas who (For they are numerous and who would venture to tell or narrate them? For the treasure-trove of the faithful is a great ocean whose breadth is without limit and whose depth is bottomless). 104 Their story is only a single bottle of water from the ocean, a spoonful from the Euphrates, a grain of sand from the beach.¹⁰⁵ By alluding to deeds that they do not recount, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar humble themselves and praise the saint. They also introduce an open-ended corpus from which their collection draws only a small number of incidents.

The authors structure their account to generate new stories about Symeon. The cult site is a center of storytelling, and the recipients of miracles are storytellers who demonstrate the saint's efficacy in body and word. When Symeon caused miracles to occur outside the cult site, supplicants came to the column to proclaim them. In one case Symeon's attendants brought a jug of water to heal a priest lodged at Šīḥ, a village a few miles from Telanissos. Although the attendants performed the healing in public and the priest proclaimed thanksgiving before the crowd, he and the crowd nevertheless went to the cult site to tell the tale in person. 106 In another case Symeon saved hundreds of Persian Christians from imprisonment, and Persian priests traveled to the cult site to relay the distant mir-محجده حل حدم حدم حدم تحده عدم دهم، معدده عداد: معده لم لهديم. ديد المله مقيعي هيم جي شه مهنه. ראתיבים האשו בעל בעל ובוא האה ([The bishops and priests] put down everything in writing just as it happened. They sent it to the saint by three priests from that region. It was read before everyone often). 107

Storytelling at the cult site created a ripple effect, constantly spurring new praises of God and his servant, Symeon. The prefect Antiochus came to Symeon's column to report that Naaman, the head of a tribe of tayyāyē loyal to Persia, allowed members of his tribe

¹⁰¹ Slater, Trail of Miracles, 119.

Ibid., 130-32.

¹⁰³ On the fluidity of oral traditions and the process of crystallization in writing, see Nagy, Poetry as Performance (n. 43 above),

¹⁰⁴ V, fol. 37v, col. 1, lns. 13-20; As., 326.24-29. The * stands in for a small circle surrounded by several dots. Translation from Doran, 145-46.

V, fol. 37v, col. 1, ln. 21-col. 2, ln. 9; As., 326.29-32; Doran, 105

¹⁰⁶ V, fol. 15r, col. 2, ln. 15-fol. 17r, col. 1, ln. 15; As., 292.35-295.16;

¹⁰⁷ V, fol. 42r, col. 1, lns. 8-15; As., 332.33-37. Translation adapted from Doran, 148-51. The story also demonstrates the author's familiarity with Persian Martyr Acts.

to convert to Christianity following Symeon's appearance to him in a vision. The authors close the account by stating, אשמשא שה אבא בה באבה אם שם المام، وحدد مداند بيسا وقده مدهم دادما [iak (Whoever heard him relating the story gave praise to God who so expanded the triumph of his worshippers everywhere). 108 Similarly, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar conclude miracles with formulaic statements that supplicants departed the site سلمع محمد (healed and praising our Lord). 109 By prompting recipients and witnesses to share their accounts on their travels home, the authors promote the reputation of the saint and the site. 110

These references to storytelling and praise encourage the creation of new oral testimony about the saint, both at the cult site and away from it. As discussed above, epigraphic evidence suggests that the manuscript was composed in association with the construction of the first major pilgrims' hostel in Telanissos. Whereas the hostel supported pilgrims who visited Symeon's site in Telanissos, the manuscript gave them the local community's own version of the saint's life. 111 The text, sections of which may have been read aloud to pilgrims at the hostel, offered visitors words, phrases, and stories through which to interpret their own interaction with the saint. It also presented structured narratives that pilgrims could emulate as they told their own stories. 112 Thus, the authors standardize the narrative of Symeon's life while simultaneously anticipating the growth of the tradition.

In conclusion, the Vatican manuscript gives an account of Symeon's life from the perspective of two local residents. Drawing on their proximity to Symeon and the daily workings of the cult site, the authors craft

108 V, fol. 39r, col. 1, ln. 23-col. 2, ln. 2; translation adapted from Doran, 147. V, fol. 39r, col. 2, lns. 1-2, is damaged; I follow Doran in reconstructing this passage from B_I, fol. 105r, col. 1, lns. 17-18. This chapter in B₁ follows V closely, although not always word for word. 109 V, fol. 14v, col. 2, lns. 2-3; As., 291.30-31; Doran, 121. For another example, see V, fol. 15r, col. 1, ln. 17; As., 292.16; Doran, 121. 110 Early Byzantine miracle collections regularly include formulaic statements at the close of individual miracles in which the supplicant is said to go forth praising God. Krueger notes the specific link between praising God and narrating the story of the disease and its cure in his analysis of the Miracles of Artemios (Writing and Holiness [n. 65 above], 66-68).

- Boero, "The Context of Production" (n. 12 above), 333-49.
- Krueger, Writing and Holiness, 69.

a narrative of Symeon's life distinguished by its private character. The authors stress their personal knowledge of Symeon through the use of first-person remarks, references to Symeon's most intimate companions as sources, and claims to knowledge of Symeon's secret ascetic practices and visions. Their constant concern for local people, places, and events positions the community at Telanissos front and center, even as they make clear Symeon's international profile. By emphasizing the physicality of Symeon's being, the authors present the local community as having special access to the saint's words and body. Similarly, the order of the text privileges the local community's experience of the saint. These choices heighten the intimacy of the text, asserting a deeply personal representation of the saint. Finally, the authors engage with a local storytelling tradition. They promote this tradition through their emphasis on the community as storytellers, crystallize it through their composition of the text, and present it as available for future devotees to use as a pattern. The following section examines how a second cult community, pilgrims, made this textual and storytelling tradition their own.

British Library Add. 14484, fols. 134r–152v: A Pilgrim's Text

The next glimpse into the life of the text comes in the form of B₂ (fig. 3). The handwriting of the manuscript dates to the sixth century. The manuscript is substantially damaged: only about 30 percent of it survives, in total nineteen stained and torn leaves. The end of the text is not preserved among the extant folios; thus, no colophon reports a date of completion, place of production, or details about the scribe(s). My analysis of the manuscript tradition suggests that the version recorded in B₂ is a revision of the text of the Vatican manuscript or a closely related version. It represents the secondoldest extant version of the Syriac *Life*. 113

113 This manuscript has received little attention from scholars. Wright first cataloged the manuscript in Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum (n. 2 above), 3:1152-53. Peeters briefly introduced it in his discussion of the Syriac Life in Orient et Byzance (n. 5 above), 115. I have provided the first full analysis of this manuscript in "Symeon and the Making of the Stylite" (n. 12 above), 145-76. For the specific sections of the text that this manuscript preserves, see table 2. Fol. 152 is not original to the manuscript but



 $Fig.~3. \quad British~Library~Add.~14484, fol.~144v. \\ @~British~Library~Board.~Reproduced~with~permission~of~the~allowed~british~Library~Board.$ British Library.

Despite the fragmentary nature of the manuscript, it is possible to study the entirety of this recension thanks to the survival of a Georgian translation of the Syriac Life preserved in the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, Georgian 6, folios 12r-66v (G), which dates at the latest to 983. It is unclear whether the scribe himself translated the manuscript into Georgian or instead worked with an earlier Georgian translation of the text.¹¹⁴ A comparison of B₂ and G reveals that the two versions bear a striking resemblance to one another. Both texts display a nearly identical truncated narrative and include unique details not found in any other Syriac manuscript. 115 The two texts never stray from one another in their narrative order. 116 Thus, G can be used to reconstruct the sections of B₂ that are no longer extant. In the following discussion of G, I employ Gérard Garitte's scholarly Latin translation of G rather than the original Georgian, which I cannot read fluently.117

contains a note written in the ninth or tenth century and bound to the manuscript at that time; I discuss this note in my conclusion, below.

Garitte published a transcription and a scholarly Latin translation of this manuscript (Vies géorgiennes, 1:i-viii, 1-77; 2:i-ii, 1-53). In addition to the translation of the Syriac Life, the manuscript contains several other texts copied by three different scribes. John Zosimus copied fols. 1r, 84r-200v, and 223v-225r, recording in them three dates for the production of this text: 981 (fol. 200v), 982 (fol. 183v), and 983 (fol. 224r). Two unnamed scribes copied fols. 2r-83v and 2017-223r, which include the Georgian translation of the Syriac Life of Symeon. Garitte held that this version of the Syriac Life was copied before John Zosimus completed his work. Consequently, he gave 983 as the terminus ante quem for its completion (ibid., 1:i-ii). 115 For example, when Symeon cured a girl from the village of

Bayt Lāhā, V and $B_{\rm I}$ specify that he had been in his enclosure for 14 months (V, fol. 14r, col. 1, ln. 23-col. 2, ln. 2; As., 290.32-36, and B_1 , fol. 63v, col. 2, lns. 6-13; B_1 ., 530.18-20). Alternatively, B_2 and G give 8 months (B2: fol. 143r, col. 1, ln. 23-col. 2, ln. 3, and Gar., 13.21). Similarly, when Symeon cured a boy from inner Anzitene, Garitte gave a Latin transliteration dadianos as the name of the general (Gar., 24.13). This is more similar to the proper name Dadinis (גגעם) found in B2, fol. 149v, col. 2, ln. 5, than the name Dionysius (محمده) found in V, fol. 54r, col. 1, ln. 4; As., 352.5, and in B₁, fol. 80v, col. 1, ln. 15; Bj., 560.2.

116 Most noticeable on this measure is the placement of Symeon's letter to Emperor Theodosius criticizing him for allowing the procurator Askepliades to return property to the Jews. V and B_I place this letter after Symeon's death in celebration of his greatness (V, fol. 73v, col. 2, ln. 7-fol. 74v, col. 1, ln. 2; As., 387.30-389.7, and B_I, fol. 126r, col. 2, ln. 8-fol. 127r, col. 1, ln. 11; Bj., 636.5-637.17). B₂ and G both place the letter following Symeon's ending of the drought in Telanissos (B₂, fol. 151v, col. 2, ln. 15-col. 2, ln. 25, and Gar., 48.1-27). 117 See note 5 on the high quality of the Latin translation.

The previous section demonstrated that the authors of V were residents of Telanissos who provided an account of Symeon's life in dialogue with local storytelling traditions at the cult site. In contrast, B2 offers insight into a pilgrim's perspective on Symeon. Again following Slater, I argue that the scribe responsible for the text of B2 attempted to create a unified narrative of Symeon's life whose structure paralleled a pilgrim's movement through time and space. Whereas the everyday lives of local residents were constantly entangled in Symeon's actions and the activities of the cult site, pilgrims enjoyed an intensely powerful but more distant experience of the saint. Their perspective is reflected in the reduced role of personal memory in the text as well as the text's growing standardization, its focus on pilgrimage, and its ordering principle. 118

Reduced Role of Personal Memory and Growing Standardization

Slater makes a case for a reduced role of memory and increased standardization by noting that pilgrims to Juazeiro told relatively few tales about the saint. Often pilgrims knew only ten stories or fewer, a striking decrease from the fifty that a resident might narrate. Whereas a local resident could accumulate a nearly endless store of personal memories about the saint, a pilgrim's contact with the saint at the cult site was brief. Consequently, their stories often omitted details dear to the hearts of residents and presented the saint in an increasingly abstract manner. They frequently deferred to accomplished storytellers or to the regularly available pamphlets recounting the saint's life. The reduced role of personal memory, the increased abstraction, and the reliance on other sources about the saint created a more standardized account of the saint's life than that presented by local residents.¹¹⁹

Diverging from Slater's case study, B2 does not reduce the number of miracles about Symeon. In fact,

118 Slater, Trail of Miracles (n. 44 above), 118, 132-48. Slater's full list of characteristics of pilgrims' stories is as follows: reduced role of personal memory, growing standardization, increased abstraction, use of fantastic detail, focus on pilgrimage and individual pilgrims, presence of an ordering principle, and tendency toward the development of a "life." In my analysis, I discuss increased abstraction together with memory and standardization. I omit the use of fantastic detail because it is not demonstrated by the $\rm B_2$ version of the Syriac $\it Life$. I incorporate the tendency toward developing a life into my analysis of the order of the text of B₂, as well as into my analysis of the text of B₁.

the scribe responsible for this version not only reproduces all the miracles contained in V but incorporates new ones into the text. (These new miracles are discussed below.) Although the scribe retains the emphasis on miracles, he regularly shortens passages by removing details from Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar's account: as a result he reduces the role of local memory and makes the text more standard. For example:

V, fol. 58v, col. 1, ln. 12–col. 2, ln. 20; As., 360.3–23

בשאה הן נומנושא של בחב שַּישׁ אם אוים אריביאי בארים הסבאשם בידו שאים עליש שאים שלים ורלים מבוקר בירים شوم حقح مه اخ شون بخ درس دست بح ماهم wit kind war on or kind of the color of حدته مد معي س عدم عمد لم لمديم عدر مه בשחוא ואיא לאי חברו פחושוא למלץ וכנוא כיו, מח ויץ אוה מה הוויז א מיני מא ואינ מון ואינ מוא איני מא או עשל המשלו, אומתפט עם אמלו, איני מיני סאסבר האנהה, התהא המעשה האנולהה, בו לבינים לה אספה אהמאיע ענדשה מישועם יד השפי הצא עסשים cr chtie ocuia zion, ocut.

Now the priest of Tell-Neššē greatly loved the saint and was always with him. The saint stood in his field and whatever the saint wore—he was clothed in skins—the priest bought at his own expense. One day that priest and his entire congregation came to the saint on business. One of the deacons, who was the church steward, said jokingly to the saint, "Untie that purse you have and make a gift to my master's household." But the saint said to him, "Did someone tell you I have money, or have you yourself noticed this?" At once his innards changed and were loose as water and he destroyed his garments and became a laughingstock. They carried him down and he was two days in great affliction, tormented and gnashing his teeth. Then he died. 120

The two passages recount the same core narrative. A priest brought his congregation to Symeon, a deacon made an insolent remark, and Symeon consequently punished the deacon with violent diarrhea followed by death. However, the passage from B₂ omits portions of the passage characteristic of V: first, the statement that the priest was responsible for paying for Symeon's plot of land and that he brought his congregation to Symeon on church business, details that place Symeon in a web of local relationships, and second, the description of Symeon's clothing, a detail that brings to mind Symeon's physical being. The omission of these highly

- 119 Ibid., 132-39.
- Translation adapted from Doran, 169.
- Translation my own with close reference to Doran's translation in the parallel passage.

B₂, fol. 144v, col. 2, ln. 19-fol. 145r, col. 1, ln. 10

הבעו וא ביי ובי מששא ואלעשא

בח ביאטוח השלב במלגבוו האמל משלהם השים הלב מנות. מאמו לח עו בק משמשנא حة محصي عن, בישחוא ואול לאי חברה פחושוא לחלי וביול מכיו. אוד מר תומשים אל אירו על יאר צוד תושת מל יאר יבים יסמוא אלמפים בחם האבולי, אים מבאי outh of four los. من کامی میور میلا دونهه

One day the priest of Tell-Neššē led

his entire congregation. They came to greet him and to be blessed by him. One of the deacons said jokingly to him, "Untie the purse you have and make a gift to my master's household." The saint said to him, "Did someone tell you that I have a purse or have you yourself perceived this?" At once his innards changed and were loose as water.

He went down as they carried him and he was two days in affliction. Then he died. 121

individualized details increases the uniformity of the passage in B₂. It places primary emphasis on Symeon's miraculous ability to punish an unbeliever rather than on his role in the socioreligious life of Telanissos.

Time and again, the scribe responsible for this version of the text standardizes the contents by eradicating details loved by residents. 122 In some passages this means cutting full lines; in others it means reducing the length of a specific sentence by including only one verb rather than two. 123 The result is a truncated narrative

- 122 For a similar removal of such details for Brazilian pilgrims, see Slater, Trail of Miracles, 133-34.
- For more miracle accounts that have been shortened, compare the healing of a man from Aleppo in V, fol. 57v, col. 1, ln. 6-fol. 58r, col. 1, ln. 9; As., 358.17-359.9; Doran, 168, with B2, fol. 144r, col. 1, ln. 13-col. 2, ln. 21; the protection of a local boy from a snake in V, fol. 58r, col. 1, ln. 9-col. 2, ln. 15; As., 359.10-28; Doran, 168, with

that focuses more on the act of the saint's intercession than on his relationship with the local community. Indeed, most pilgrims would have been far more concerned about Symeon's ability to grant miracles than about his role in village life. The change of wording in the opening line of Symeon's healing of the young girl from Bayt Lāhā at the behest of her father drives home لاماله ملا معناه که برهای برمای برما (There was a man of Bayt Lāhā, a village which was separated from *Tell-Neššē* by about three miles).¹²⁴ In contrast, B2 reads עד הא איז האמ האמ האמ האמ האמ مهالم ملاية مهرس جه ماهة محسبة مهام مرسا (A man came to him from Bayt Lāhā, a village that was three miles away from the enclosure). 125 Whereas V highlights Telanissos, B₂ focuses on the enclosure the place where miracles were granted.

In addition to discarding details important to the local community, the scribe of this version presents a portrait of the saint that is impersonal and abstract.126 He frequently removes references to firstperson accounts. 127 The G recension omits Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's names and their request for prayers. Moreover, it drops entire passages of praise to Symeon, further heightening the immediacy of his miracles. 128 It also regularly ignores Symeon's physical attributes. In the passage above in which Symeon punished a deacon, B₂ does not follow V in describing Symeon as clothed in skins. Similarly, in the account of Symeon's tonsure by Mara, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar compare his appearance to that of David, quoting 1 Samuel 16:12.129 B2 leaves out the passage from Samuel and significantly condenses the description of Symeon's physical features, simply recording,

ומא השמקים אלש הככל אשמה אה מיק משה ליקו מים מיקים (When that bishop saw how becoming his face was, he marveled at him). 130 When Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar describe the healing of Symeon's rotting foot, they use three clauses: "his body grew strong, his presence was radiant, and his face shone."131 G reduces this passage to a single clause: resplenduit vultus eius (his face shone).¹³² The scribe responsible for the text of B2 is less interested than the authors of V in firstperson accounts, panegyric to the saint, and the saint's physical appearance. He instead chooses to emphasize the aspects of Symeon's career most important to a pilgrim: his ability to heal the sick, offer protection to the weak, bring justice to the maltreated, and intercede in strained political situations. 133

In her study of pilgrims to Juazeiro, Slater notes that pilgrims were dependent on printed materials that gave highlights from the saint's life. 134 The shortened version of the text found in B2 would have been more appealing to them for that purpose than the V version of the text. V was probably meant to be read aloud to pilgrims staying in the village's hostel, but its length ensured that it could not be delivered from start to finish in a single sitting. One can imagine that readings of V functioned much like local villagers' oral renditions of miracles: narrators delivered individual accounts of miracles and groups of miracles decontextualized from the full life. In contrast, B2 could be read aloud

B₂, fol. 144r, col. 2, ln. 22-fol. 144v, col. 1, ln. 25; and the healing of a youth from the low country, V, fol. 58r, col. 2, ln. 15-fol. 58v, col. 1, ln. 11; As., 359.29-360.2; Doran, 169, with B₂, fol. 144v, col. 1, ln. 25-col. 2, ln. 19.

¹²⁴ V, fol. 14r, col. 1, lns. 1-5; As., 290.16-19; translation from Doran, 120 (emphasis added).

¹²⁵ B₂, fol. 143r, col. 1, lns. 1–4 (emphasis added).

For a discussion of increasing abstraction in pilgrims' accounts, see Slater, Trail of Miracles, 136-39.

¹²⁷

V, fol. 21v, col. 1, ln. 23-fol. 23v, col. 1, ln. 20; As., 302.27-305.15; Doran, 129-31, is omitted from G at Gar., 31-33. For a full list of omissions, see table 2.

¹²⁹ See notes 81 and 82.

B₂, fol. 137v, col. 1, lns. 9–12; translation my own.

See note 83. 131

Gar., 34.2.

¹³³ Tendency toward abstraction with regard to the stylites' physical appearance occurs not only in B2 but also in graffiti in surrounding villages that may have been carved by pilgrims. These graffiti are nonfigurative sketches of the column composed of a base (often represented by a single horizontal line or triangle), a shaft (in the form of a single vertical line), and a platform (like the base, depicted with a horizontal line or triangle). The body of the saint is either replaced with the image of the cross or not shown at all. In these stylized sketches, the identity of the stylite is completely ignored: pilgrims have shifted their attention to the power of the column. See, for example, graffiti at Dayr Sim'ān and Bāfitīn, discussed by I. Peña, P. Castellana, and R. Fernández, Les stylites syriens, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Collectio Minor 16 (Milan, 1975), 192-94, figs. 44 and 46; Schachner, "The Archaeology of the Stylite" (n. 55 above), 371-72. D. T. M. Frankfurter describes these graffiti as "'archetypal' anthropoid" figures in "Stylites and Phallobates: Pillar Religions in Late Antique Syria," VChr 44 (1990): 186.

¹³⁴ Slater, Trail of Miracles, 135.

or silently in its entirety in just a few hours, much as Egeria describes doing when she visited Thekla's shrine near Seleukeia (modern Silifke). While at the martyrium, she read through the entire Acts of Thekla. 135 The written text provided a narrative frame for Egeria's veneration of the saint. It is possible to imagine the B₂ version of the Syriac *Life* being put to similar use.

Though the scribe responsible for B₂ may have composed the text with pilgrims in mind, it is of course impossible to know whether the B2 manuscript was employed on pilgrimage. With that said, the material dimensions of B2 would have suited the needs of pilgrims. The condensed text required fewer folios of parchment, and the manuscript itself frequently includes more lines per page than do V and B_I. It would have been less expensive to produce and purchase, easier to transport, and quicker to flip through than the other versions. It is also striking that unlike V and B_I, the manuscript bears signs of heavy use. Readers jotted down symbols in the margins, thereby indicating their desire to make quick reference to specific passages, perhaps during a visit to the cult site. 136

In summary, the scribe responsible for the version of the text preserved in B₂ crafts a truncated narrative of the Syriac *Life* by eliding details about the local community at Telanissos, first-person accounts of the saint, passages of praise to Symeon, and details of his physical appearance. These omissions reduce the importance of local community memory, which was emphasized in V. They make the saint's personality and appearance abstract—the saint on his column floats above mundane society rather than being contextualized in it. In addition, this version easily supported the logistical needs of nonresidents making pilgrimage: it was quick to read and easy to flip through. The result is a

135 Egeria, Itinerary, ch. 23.5: text in P. Maraval and M. C. Díaz y Díaz, Journal de Voyage et Lettre sur la Bse Égérie, SC 296 (Paris, 1982), 230; translation in J. Wilkinson, trans., Egeria's Travels, 3rd ed. (1999; reprint, Oxford, 2006), 141. Since the Acts hovered on the boundary of the biblical canon in late antiquity, Egeria's reading of the Acts can be seen as displaying continuity with her reading of biblical scripture elsewhere on her pilgrimage. At the same time, the Acts of Thekla do focus on Thekla's life, much like a saint's life. In this way, it offers an important example of a pilgrim making use of a biography when venerating a saint.

136 For example, B₂, fols. 143v, 144v, 145r, and 147r. Of course, such marks may be made in other contexts, such as liturgical or monastic settings.

standardized text that emphasizes the primary goal of pilgrimage—that is, ritual intercession with the saint.

Focus on Pilgrimage and Individual Pilgrims

In revising the text, the scribe responsible for this version made careful choices not only about what to omit but also about what to add. The additions include a cycle of seven new miracles in the middle of the narrative as well as Symeon's defeat of Isaurian raiders outside his hometown of Sisa. 137 The new miracles illuminate two important approaches to the text. First, the miraculous is continuous: Symeon's intercessory powers are always available to the pilgrim. By adding new miracles, the scribe extends the work of Bar Hatar and Symeon bar Eupolemos, participating in the cult's storytelling tradition just as modeled by the two original authors. The new miracles are similar in structure to those in the Vatican manuscript but forgo details that grow out of local memory of the saint. Like the shortened miracles in B2, the stories are brief, abstract, and lack personal memory. Second, the scribe prioritizes the pilgrim and his needs over those of local villagers. Thus, in the seven new miracles added to this recension, one supplicant was from Palestine, one from the west, one from Telanissos, and the remainder from unidentified places. These unidentified pilgrims could very well have been from Telanissos, but the scribe chooses not to label them as such. The scribe's focus is on preparing pilgrims for their visit to the saint.

Seven new miracles: B₂, fol. 147r, col. 1, ln. 1-fol. 148r, col. 2, In. 5, includes five and a half of the seven new miracles; the first miracle and the beginning of the second are not preserved because of damage to the manuscript. G presents all seven miracles: Gar., 20.13-22.20 (chs. 55-61). These new miracle accounts appear in some form in later manuscripts. In the appendix of his translation, Doran (in Doran, 214–20) translates versions of them from B_I, fol. 74v, col. 2, ln. 21-fol. 77v, col. 1, ln. 15; Bj., 550.3-555.2; and Church of the Forty Martyrs, Mardin 271, fol. 143r, ln. 2-fol. 144v, ln. 15 (pp. 289.2-292.15). At this point in the recension, B2 is closer to the Mardin manuscript than to B₁. B₂, fol. 135r, col. 1, ln. 1-fol. 135v, col. 2, ln. 16, also includes a short account of the Isaurian raid. These folios are damaged but the text can be reconstructed from British Library Add. 12174, fol. 19v, col. 1, ln. 41-fol. 20r, col. 1, ln. 12, and Gar., 4.4-5.3. Again, the Isaurian raid appears in later manuscripts. Doran (in Doran, 207-10) provides translations of accounts of the Isaurian raid in B₁, fol. 51v, col. 1, ln. 8-fol. 53r, col. 1, ln. 6; Bj., 512.14-514.17; and Mardin 271, fol. 126v, ln. 13-fol. 128v, ln. 15 (pp. 256.13-260.15). The accounts in B_I and the Mardin manuscript are longer and more detailed than in B₂.

B₂'s miracles, both old and new, offer a blueprint for receiving successful intercession:

> מם לפה זאבו לזה לאמול לפש מילם בא ראום של המש ששם הציד היותב שמבלה לוג המשול המוביום תפה לוו השמש لمل بالمحمد ملحه ماحم ماحم المما לעד בי אלבינהה, שב בי מנא בפיא מול שחב מה הזולי מו ישורה מו במבת الحزر عمد حسيم عمد حين ملم الممد אשונים חבושבאה ופם מנה שאוא מח 138 Kolkl husea haluhka

A certain woman had an evil demon dwelling in her and it was tormenting her. Blood flowed from her mouth. Her relations led her and brought her to the saint and they entered (the enclosure) and informed him on her account. He said to one of his disciples: "Take some of this dust and go and apply it to her. Say to that demon: 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, leave her and do not torture her again." Immediately that demon left her and she was healed and praised God. 139

This miracle, the fourth of the seven new miracles in B₂, models for the pilgrim what to expect, how to act, and the successful outcome of a visit to Qal'at Sim'ān. The woman in the miracle visited the site in good faith, in contrast to the belligerent deacon who suffered Symeon's wrath. She maintained decorum, waiting outside the cult site's bounds because she was a woman. She received a substance from the cult site, in this case dust, to aid in healing. Symeon even chastised the demon directly, resulting in its expulsion from the woman. The miracle offers an exemplum for future pilgrims.

Even though this miracle is a new addition to the text, it maintains generic conformity with miracles elsewhere in B2. The addition does not destabilize but instead affirms the ritual patterns set out by V and reiterated in B₂. By truncating miracles, compiling them side by side, and adding new miracles, the scribe responsible for the B₂ text drives home the effectiveness of Symeon's abilities and perpetuates the storytelling tradition at the cult site. He praises the saint by expanding the story, while simultaneously he prepares pilgrims for their own encounter with the saint.

Ordering Principle

As shown above, the order of the Vatican manuscript presents Symeon as constantly fulfilling God's purpose and privileges the community of Telanissos as central to Symeon's ministry. In B₂ the scribe reorders the narrative to construct chronological and causal links between episodes. Symeon's life becomes one of progressive saintly transformation, modeling the spiritual journey of pilgrimage. The resulting text is not simply a record of significant events but a unified narrative that can introduce Symeon to pilgrims who are not integrated into daily interactions at the saint's shrine. Again, Slater's analysis of the cult of Padre Cícero prol vides an instructive framework for this study. I employ two of Slater's categories: the presence of an ordering principle and the tendency toward developing a "life." I differ from Slater in separating the idea of a "unified narrative" from a "master narrative," two categories that she merges. 140 I argue that B2 presents a unified narrative in that it is a holistic, chronologically organized account of Symeon's life. B_I, in contrast, provides a master narrative, in that the scribe responsible for this version takes this unified narrative and reintegrates the historical elements of V. In this way he constructs a personage that is both historical and mythical.

The scribe responsible for the version preserved in B₂ takes a chronological approach to Symeon's life. (Table 2 in the appendix compares the order of V and G, with reference to surviving portions of B₂; again, in this section I employ chapter numbers in order to coordinate with tables in the appendix.) After arriving in Telanissos, Symeon endured a period of seclusion and battles with demons (chs. 26-30). He then healed pilgrims from Bayt Lāhā, the plain of Antioch, and Aleppo, as well as other local residents (chs. 31–38). Next, he underwent a second period of seclusion and mentorship by Mar Bas (chs. 39-50). Bar Ḥaṭar and Symeon bar Eupolemos placed select passages from these two sections of the text later in the narrative, in order to emphasize the importance of Symeon's relationship with the local community (chs. 89-92, 93-101, and 103 in Doran's translation are equivalent to

140 Slater, Trail of Miracles, 142-47.

B₂, fol. 147r, col. 1, ln. 24-col. 2, ln. 14.

This passage is similar to Mardin 271, fol. 143v, lns. 4–11. In my translation, I have made close reference to Doran, 216. See note 137.

chs. 35–38 and 39–50 in Garitte's edition; see the discussion of these sections of V above). By uniting these passages, the scribe responsible for the text of B₂ both constructs a chronological narrative and asserts a causal relationship between episodes. Symeon's initial period of seclusion prepared him to execute local miracles; it also spurred longer periods of isolation.

The chronological and causal approach continues throughout the text. Altered by his initial period of miracles and isolation and no longer bound by earthly ties of mentorship and friendship, Symeon was ready to set up his first column—a stone two cubits high. His ascent precipitated Mar Bas's retreat into a monastery and the death of Symeon's brother Shemshi, with whom Symeon had originally embarked upon the ascetic life (chs. 51-54). Whereas this shedding of worldly relationships and ascent to the column occurs at the end of the Vatican manuscript (chs. 102 and 104–6 in Doran's translation), the scribe of the version preserved in B₂ makes these events a central step in the development of Symeon's holiness.

Newly empowered by his ascetic performance of column standing, Symeon carried out even more miracles, here not only for local residents but for long-distance pilgrims as well. This section of the text includes the seven new miracles discussed above (chs. 55-73). Next, Symeon experienced his most powerful visions: visits from Moses and Elijah (chs. 74–77). Finally, Symeon endured his most trying period of ascetic suffering: the infection and healing of his foot (chs. 78–85). His vision and suffering transformed him, enabling him to accomplish his most impressive miraculous achievements: political interventions, miraculous resolutions to natural catastrophes, appearances in far-off places, and ultimately his appeal to the emperor (chs. 86–101).

The chronological and causal arrangement of the text presents Symeon's visions and ascetic trials as critical steps in his spiritual growth. Symeon's ascent to the column in combination with his periods of intense suffering and visionary prayer shaped his ability to convey God's grace to his devotees. Each set of prayer practices (chs. 26–30, 39–50, 74–85) enhanced his ability to perform miracles, an ability that peaked in his intercession with the emperor (ch. 101). This approach to Symeon's life differs substantially from the approach of Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar, who portray Symeon as fulfilling God's purpose in a continuous rather than a progressive fashion. In V Symeon radiated God's power but was always integrated into human affairs. In B₂ Symeon's column standing, visions, and ascetic prayer allowed for his progressive ascent from the mundane world.

The chronological and causal narrative models the potency of transformative prayer experiences for the reader. Just as intense prayer shaped Symeon's spiritual abilities, whether through ascetic training of the body or through visionary episodes, such activities also could alter the pilgrim's relationship with the divine. In this way, the organization of the narrative mirrors the prayer of a pilgrim's journey. In Slater's words, pilgrims' stories are structured so as to "connect a series of episodes that would otherwise function much as random dots on an experiential page. The goal-directed progression of the 'life' suggests the journey, toward a designated destination, upon which as pilgrims they consciously embark."141 Early pilgrimage itineraries complement this perspective, framing the pilgrim's journey as occurring in stages with intense moments of spiritual transformation. Egeria and the anonymous Bordeaux pilgrim describe progressive movement through the Near Eastern landscape marked by recurrent stops at sites mentioned in scripture. At each site Egeria prayed, read lines from scripture, and, in select cases, participated in liturgy. 142

In addition to emulating the spiritual journey of the pilgrim, the B₂ version of the Syriac *Life* pairs nicely with the spatial organization of Symeon's monumental pilgrimage complex. Between 470 and 476, an unknown patron—possibly the emperor—began a renovation of the cult site. 143 The first phase of the project

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 146-47.

¹⁴² For Egeria's Itinerary, text in Maraval and Díaz y Díaz, Journal de Voyage, 119-319; translation in Wilkinson, Egeria's Travels, 107-66. For the Bordeaux Pilgrim, text in P. Geyer and O. Cuntz, "Itinerarium Burdigalense," in Itineraria et Alia Geographica, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 1–26; translation in Wilkinson, Egeria's Travels, 22-34.

¹⁴³ Archaeologists and historians are unsure of precisely when building commenced. R. Lane Fox dates it to 470 under Emperor Leo (d. 474), linking imperial support for the project with Daniel the Stylite's influence on the emperor; see "The Life of Daniel," in Portraits: Biographical Representations in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire, ed. M. J. Edwards and S. Swain (Oxford, 1997), 192-95. Tchalenko (Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord [n. 28 above], 1:231) estimates that construction began early in the reign of Zeno, around 476, following the insurrection of Basiliskos. He argues that since the Syriac Life makes no mention

included leveling large sections of the mountain on which Symeon's column stood and constructing a cruciform basilica around the column as well as a baptistery. Over the next century the complex expanded to boast a monastery and an additional church adjoining the baptistery. The path between the village of Telanissos and the cult complex was crowded with shops, a bathing complex, and a reception building. 144 This building project commenced either immediately before or on the heels of the composition of the Vatican manuscript in 473. The authors make no direct reference to the project, because of an intentional omission or because the project simply did not launch until after they had finished their text. In contrast, B2 postdates the first phase of construction. Thus it is possible that the scribe was familiar with the spatial organization of the newly expanded pilgrimage complex.

As Jean-Pierre Sodini has shown, the architecture of the monumental pilgrimage complex constructed a spatial hierarchy for pilgrims. They began their visit to the cult site by ascending up the sacred way, which led from Telanissos to the entrance of the cult site. Pilgrims then passed through the forecourt and into the south arm of the cruciform basilica. Inside, they at last viewed the column, located in an octagonal martyrium at the center of the basilica's four arms (fig. 4). Arches framed the pilgrims' northward path from Telanissos to the column. These arches marked the sacred way, entrance to the cult site, monumental door of the cruciform basilica, and eight sides of the octagonal martyrium. Each arch signaled the pilgrims' movement away from the mundane world, invited them into spaces of increased holiness, and previewed the veneration of the column. 145

The pilgrim's progression through the cult site aligns with the chronological and causal structure of B₂. Both the renovated pilgrimage complex and the new order of B₂ fashion the pilgrim's linear journey as defined by increasingly intense prayer experiences and culminating in a vision of Symeon's column. Furthermore, one of the seven newly added miracles in B2 hints at an even closer association between the spatial organization of the new complex and the text. Garitte provides the following Latin translation:

Illis temporibus plagis variis arrepti sunt homines t'alanšenses et peribant; congregati sunt et rogabant sanctum ut rogaret Deum pro eis; et ut prolongavit orationem pro eis, erat calix unus lapidis stans in fenestra communionis, et totus populus erat stans; repletus est calix aqua per se ipsum et redundavit in terram ex omni parte; et acceperunt omnes homines ex aqua, et unxerunt ea corpora sua, et confestim sanati sunt a plaga sua. 146

At that time, people from Tell-Neššē were struck with various pestilences and died. They assembled and petitioned the saint that he intercede on their behalf to God. When Symeon offered a prayer before them, there was a stone cup standing in the Eucharistic niche and all the people were standing. The cup filled with water spontaneously and overflowed on all sides onto the earth. All the men took from

of the new complex in 473, construction must have begun after the composition of the Syriac Life and therefore ought to be attributed to Zeno, whose reign began in 474.

¹⁴⁴ The cult site (modern Qal'at Sim'ān) and the village of Telanissos (modern Dayr Sim'ān) were the subject of substantial archaeological investigation for much of the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first century. Major early publications include D. Krencker and R. Naumann, Die Wallfahrtskirche des Simeon Stylites in Kal'at Sim'ân: I, Bericht über Untersuchungen und Grabungen im Frühjahr 1938, ausgeführt im Auftrag des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts (Berlin, 1939), and Tchalenko, Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord, 1:205-76. Between 1980 and 2006 Jean-Pierre Sodini directed excavations at Qal'at Sim'ān (La mission archéologique française de Qal'at Sem'an); research focused on the cruciform martyrium and the baptistery. In 2007 Jean-Luc Biscop assumed the role of director of excavations, but owing to political instability in Syria excavations have ceased. The new mission enlarged the area of study to include the village of Telanissos (Dayr Sim'ān). The team excavated the baths and sections of the boutiques along the sacred way and adjoining the triumphal arch. They also investigated the monastery at the cult site and the northwest monastery in Telanissos among other structures. The bibliography is too extensive to provide here; for an up-to-date overview of the structures at the cult site and some of the recent archaeological work, see J.-P. Sodini and J.-L. Biscop, "Qal'at Sem'an et Deir Sem'an: Naissance et développement d'un lieu de pèlerinage durant l'Antiquité tardive," in Architecture paléochrétienne, ed. J.-M. Spieser (Gollion, 2011), 11-59. The site has sustained substantial damage throughout the course of the Syrian Civil War, including airstrikes in May 2016.

¹⁴⁵ J.-P. Sodini, "La hiérarchisation des espaces à Qal'at Sem'an," in Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en Occident: Études comparées, ed. M. Kaplan (Paris, 2001), 253-55. See also the discussion in A. M. Yasin, Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean: Architecture, Cult, and Community (Cambridge, 2009), 170-71.

¹⁴⁶ Gar., 20.32-21.3.



Fig. 4. Symeon's column at Qal'at Sim'ān, looking toward the east arm and apse of the cruciform basilica. Photo by author.

the water, they smeared their bodies with it, and immediately they were healed from their pestilence.147

B₂ preserves the following portion of the passage:

תשב של שלם זבם תושומסו תאמשם . . . سلامل حصا شه محد معدد مر حمارهم vere - ower ofwio krik to vere لصه حج ملع تحبه محسد مملاممه ج 148 canplans

... in the Eucharistic niche. As all the people were standing, that cup filled with water and overflowed on all sides onto the earth. Everybody ran, they smeared themselves with this water, and immediately they were healed from their pestilence.149

Here, a crowd of supplicants from Telanissos appeals to Symeon because they are ill. The appeal is not unique, but the form of aid is. In both V and the truncated version in B₂, pilgrims generally receive healing through contact with a substance from the cult site: dust, water, oil, or *ḥnānā*.¹⁵⁰ In this passage, the miraculous substance, water, does not come from the productive earth of the cult site. Rather, it comes from a chalice. Symeon's power is conflated with that of the Eucharistic liturgy.

This subsuming of Symeon's power into the Eucharist also occurs in the spatial organization of the cruciform basilica. As noted above, Symeon's column is located at the center of the basilica, framed by the octagonal martyrium. A pilgrim seeking aid from Symeon would enter through the south arm of the basilica and proceed to the column—but that was not the end of his journey. The column marked the entrance to the liturgical sanctuary in the eastern arm of the basilica. Transformed by contact with the column, the pilgrim at last departed from his north-south axis and turned

eastward to enter the liturgical space. In the newly constructed complex, veneration of the column prepared the pilgrim for participation in the liturgy.¹⁵¹ Just as Symeon's power emanated from the liturgical vessel in the newly added miracle in B2, so at the cult site the column's power was intimately linked with liturgical celebration.

In sum, the scribe responsible for the text of B₂ crafted a narrative in dialogue with the needs of pilgrims and with contemporary cult practice. The scribe discards details important to local communal memory, doing away with first-person accounts, passages of praise, and descriptions of the saint's corporeal nature. The result is a shortened and standardized narrative. The miracle becomes the sole focus, to such an extent that the scribe adds new miracles even while truncating other elements. These miracles, old and new, offer exemplars of successful intercession. In addition, the chronological and causal organization of the narrative emphasizes the potency of transformative prayer experiences, making Symeon's ascetic combat, visions, and ascent to the column central steps in his ability to manifest God's grace through miracles. This organization mirrors the journey of the pilgrim both through the Near Eastern landscape and through the newly constructed pilgrimage complex at Symeon's cult site. Thus, the truncated text, the newly added passages, and the revised order construct a unified narrative of Symeon's life that could easily introduce pilgrims to ritual intercession by the saint.

British Library Add. 14484, fols. 48v-133v: A Monk's Text

The third and final late antique manuscript of the Syriac *Life of Symeon* is B₁ (fig. 5).¹⁵² The handwriting of the manuscript dates to the sixth century. 153 The entirety of the manuscript survives, but no concluding note reports the date, place, or institutional context of production or the name of the scribe responsible for

Translation my own.

B₂, fol. 147r, col. 1, lns. 1-9.

Translation my own.

G. Vikan's research highlights the Mediterranean-wide practice of procuring material "blessings" on pilgrimage; see Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art, rev. ed. (Washington, DC, 2010). The use of dust also appears in one of the seven miracles newly added to B₂: specifically, the healing of the possessed woman (see above).

Sodini, "La hiérarchisation des espaces," 253-55; Yasin, Saints and Church Spaces, 170-71.

For the transcription and translations of the text, see note 4. In addition, Doran translates select passages in B_I that are not found in V (Doran, 207-21).

¹⁵³ Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum (n. 2 above), 3:1152.

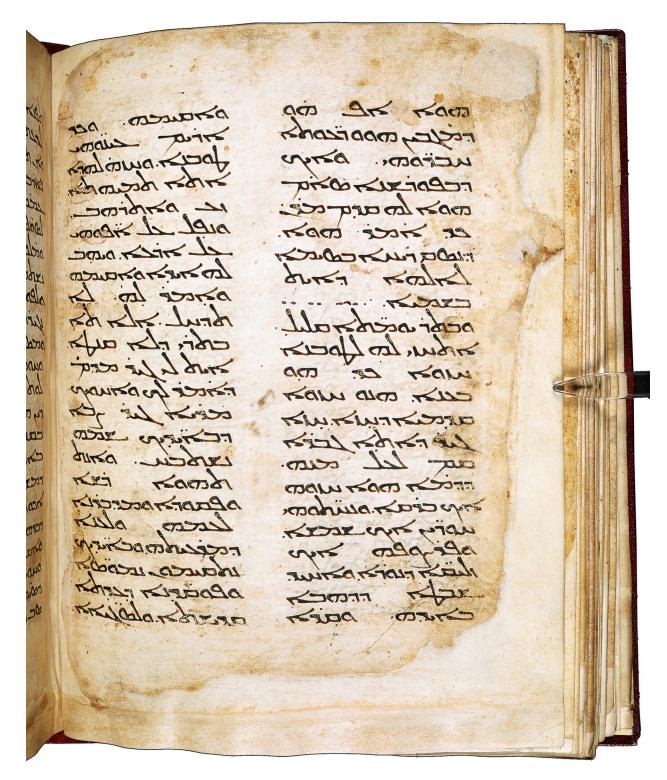


Fig. 5. British Library Add. 14484, fol. 49v. © British Library Board. Reproduced with permission of the British Library.

copying the text.¹⁵⁴ A close analysis of V, B₂, and B₁ shows that the scribe responsible for the text of B_T collated versions of V and B2 to create a third version of the *Life*. 155

The previous sections associated V and B₂ with the local community and with pilgrims to Telanissos, respectively, a judgment made from the contents of the manuscripts and guided by anthropological comparisons with the cult of Padre Cícero Romão Batista. B_I contains fewer hints than V and B2 regarding the context of its production, because many literary elements of V and B₂ are reproduced in B₁. Nevertheless, drawing on those changes which do exist in B₁, together with the broader context of sixth-century devotion to stylites and Syriac manuscript production, I argue that B_I offers insight into a third cult community: that is, monks. The scribe crafted a version of the text closely linked to the rise of monastic devotion to Symeon. He appeals to a monastic audience, representing Symeon as a monastic father and counting monks among the beneficiaries of Symeon's miracles. Based in a monastic intellectual context, he builds on the work of previous scribes to construct a master narrative of Symeon's life.

- 154 The first folio (fol. 48) may not be original to the manuscript. Differences in the size of the folio, hand, and number of lines per column suggest that a later scribe copied this folio, probably in the course of repairing the manuscript. Further paleographic study is necessary to identify the date of the hand.
- Comparison of the three manuscripts shows that B₁ reproduces words and passages from V not preserved in B2. Similarly, B2 includes words and passages from V not preserved in B_I. This suggests that the text of either B₁ or B₂ was a collation of two earlier versions. In previous scholarship ("Symeon and the Making of the Stylite" [n. 12 above]), I concluded that B2 presents a shortened and simplified version of the text of V, which omitted redundancies and clarified problematic passages. B_I retains and expands the language and contents of B2 but also pays attention to the text of V, often inserting lines and full passages from V into B_I. Specifically, "This conclusion is based on the premise that it would be easier to integrate and expand two texts, as the text of B1 does, rather than condense two texts while retaining the order of one but selecting vocabulary from both texts." In addition, "The text of B1 is a carefully composed text, as many previous commentators have noticed. This scribe who first composed this version of the text made precise decisions about word choice, word order, and the narrative organization of the text. It is easy to imagine such a scribe making reference to and selecting between the texts of two different manuscripts" (161).

Symeon as Monastic Father

Until this point, we have not considered the involvement of monks in Symeon's cult. Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Hatar place great emphasis on Symeon's community of disciples, as discussed in the first section of this article. The authors consistently use the terms "his disciples" (אלביגסה), "those who served him" (هل موة معدد المعدد المع "attendant" (حصيع). 156 In selecting these terms over ر (penitent, and المناء (penitent, and المناء (penitent, mourner), the authors avoid several important terms in the Syriac vocabulary of monasticism. ¹⁵⁷Indeed, there is no indication that Symeon's disciples, as portrayed in V, were ascetic, and many seem not to have lived with the community permanently.¹⁵⁸ Recent research on early monasticism challenges scholars to look past binary oppositions such as eremitic versus cenobitic, desert versus city, and monk versus lay. It emphasizes the need to investigate the varied landscape of early monasticism. Claudia Rapp points to the importance of organized groups of pious laypeople within this landscape. 159 In my estimation, the community of

- 156 For the sake of brevity, I here include only one reference to each term, although they occur repeatedly throughout the text. אל (his disciples): V, fol. 5v, col. 2, ln. 21; As., 274.37; Doran, 108. مم مهم معدد الله (those who served him): V, fol. 18v, col. 1, lns. 4-5; As., 297.32-33; Doran, 125. @ (attendant): V, fol. 31v, col. 1, ln. 21; As., 316.34; Doran, 139.
- 157 In addition, the authors never speak of Symeon as an abbot (حنة), nor is the enclosure called a monastery (حنة). But they do use these terms when discussing the Teleda monastery, thereby making an even clearer distinction between the community of disciples and organized monasticism. Also, in V's account of Symeon's vision of Elijah, Elijah instructs Symeon to be concerned for the crippled, the poor, the priests, the priesthood, the laws of the church, and "your brother monks" (متتء حتم), among other groups. This reference to monks places Symeon in hierarchical relationship over them; it does not necessarily indicate that monks made up a sizable portion of Symeon's devotees in the 470s or earlier. See V, fol. 20r, col. 1, ln. 15-fol. 20v, col. 1, ln. 25; As., 300.10-301.8; Doran, 127.
- 158 In a forthcoming publication, I discuss the organization of this community, including recruitment, membership, and the community's duties at the cult site.
- Two helpful discussions of these binary oppositions as constructed in ancient sources are J. E. Goehring, Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Egyptian Monasticism (Harrisburg, PA, 1999), and D. Caner, Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity (Berkeley, 2002). For ongoing research on this topic, see the work of Claudia Rapp and Columba Stewart. I thank Rapp for sharing with me a draft of her essay "Christian Piety in Late Antiquity: Contexts and

disciples as portrayed in V seems to display some form of organized lay piety rather than the observances of a cenobitic or semi-eremitic community.

There is good reason to take seriously V's differentiation between disciples and monks. Various sources on Symeon indicate that substantial tension existed between Symeon and monastic communities in the early and mid-fifth century. Theodoret's *History* of the Monks of Syria, the Syriac Life of Symeon, and Antonius's Life of Symeon all recount that Symeon failed in his attempt to participate in the routine of cenobitic monasticism and was consequently forced out of the Teleda monastery. 160 Furthermore, while each gives a different explanation for the meaning of the column, they all presume that stylitism was an individual rather than communal form of ascetic prayer. In addition, both Evagrios Scholastikos and John Diakrinomenos report that monks demanded that Symeon descend from his column. 161 Finally, V and B₂. altogether exclude monks from the ranks of Symeon's

Contestations," an earlier version of which she presented at a conference in honor of Brent Shaw, "Subjects of Empire: Political and Cultural Exchange in Imperial Rome," Princeton University, 12-13 May 2017. Her essay is forthcoming in a volume edited by Harriet Flower and AnneMarie Luijendijk.

160 Theodoret, History of the Monks of Syria, ch. 26.4-5: text in Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen, Histoire des moines de Syrie (n. 7 above), 2:164-69; translation in Price, A History of the Monks of Syria (n. 7 above), 161–62. Antonius, Life of Symeon, chs. 4–10: text in Lietzmann and Hilgenfeld, Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites (n. 4 above), 22.15-32.22; translation in Doran, 88-91. For the Syriac Life of Symeon, see V, fol. 7v, col. 1, ln. 7-fol. 11v, col. 1, ln. 10; As., 277.26-285.15; Doran, 111-17.

161 Evagrios Scholastikos in his *Ecclesiastical History* (bk. 1.13) records that one of the desert fathers came to Symeon on behalf of his community and demanded that Symeon explain why he had abandoned the path well-trodden by previous saints: text in A. Hübner, J. Bidez, and L. Parmentier, *Historia Ecclesiastica = Kirchengeschichte*, 2 vols., Fontes Christiani 57 (Turnhout, 2007), 1:158-60; translation in M. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, Translated Texts for Historians 33 (Liverpool, 2000), 35. According to the Epitome of John Diakrinomenos's lost Ecclesiastical History (bk. 5), monks from Egypt found fault with Symeon's column standing and refused to be in communion with him: text in Hansen, Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte (n. 60 above), 153-54, frags. 534-37; translation in Price, A History of the Monks of Syria, 174n16. In addition, monks in the Life of Daniel the Stylite (ch. 7) questioned Symeon's legitimacy and contended that Symeon's column standing was only a vainglorious proceeding: text in Delehaye, Les saints stylites (n. 60 above), 7-8; translation in Dawes and Baynes, Three Byzantine Saints (n. 60 above), 10.

supplicants. Many sought intercession from Symeon villagers, priests, bishops, civic officials, governors, even emperors—but a monk never turned to Symeon for aid. The same exclusion is notable in Theodoret's life of Symeon in his *History of the Monks of Syria*.

Although monks paid little attention to Symeon for much of the fifth century, archaeological evidence dating to the turn of the sixth century and after testifies to the growth of monastic devotion to Symeon. Monks exhibited an increased presence at the cult site and involvement in pilgrimage. In Telanissos two monasteries were constructed or extensively remodeled at the end of the fifth century: the monastery located at the northwest edge of the village and a monastery adjoining the cruciform basilica at the cult site. 162 Two more monasteries were constructed on the southwest and southeast edges of the village in the sixth century. 163 In addition, a growing number of cenobitic monasteries across the Near East housed stylite columns in the sixth century, providing evidence that column standing was no longer viewed as an individualistic ascetic practice. 164

Changes in the text of B_I suggest that the scribe responsible for this version composed it for or within a monastic milieu, perhaps in Telanissos or another monastery with special devotion to stylites. The text's interpretation of Symeon shifts from solitary ascetic to monastic father. The first indication of this shift appears at the very start of the manuscript. Previous manuscripts give the heading محمد، عمد، عمده سےمک, "The Heroic Acts of the Blessed Mar Symeon" (V), and بے سدہ, "The Heroic Acts of

- 162 Northwest monastery: J. Azpeitia and A. Desreumaux, "Deir Sim'ân, monastère nord-ouest: Présentation de l'église," TM 15 (2005): 37-66; J.-L. Biscop, "Réorganisation du monachisme syrien autour du sanctuaire de Saint-Syméon," in Les églises en monde syriaques, ed. F. Briquel-Chatonnet (Paris, 2013), 145-51. Monastery at the cult site: Biscop, "Réorganisation du monachisme syrien," 139-44; Biscop, "Le sanctuaire et le village des pèlerins" (n. 73 above), 1424-31. Air strikes conducted in May 2016 resulted in significant damage to the monastery at the cult site.
- 163 Southwest monastery: Biscop, "Réorganisation du monaB chisme syrien," 151-58, and "Le sanctuaire et le village des pèlerins," 1438–42. Southeast monastery: Biscop, "Réorganisation du monaa chisme syrien," 158-61, and "Le sanctuaire et le village des pèlerins,"
- 164 Peña, Castellana, and Fernández, Les stylites syriens (n. 133 above), 79-159; Schachner, "The Archaeology of the Stylite" (n. 55 above), 329-97.

Mar Symeon" (B₂). 165 B_I retains the heading مي يع תכי, "The Heroic Acts of Mar Symeon," on several folios within the manuscript. 166 However, the heading on the first folio (48v) of B_I reads مي سدم الرحنة محمد "The Heroic Acts of Mar Symeon: Head of the Mourners." This folio may not be original to the manuscript, given the differences in the size of the folio, scribal hand, and number of lines per column. Presumably, a later scribe copied this folio in the course of repairing the manuscript, and it is impossible to know if he did so precisely or took liberties in adapting the text's contents. Nevertheless, the new title, "Head of the Mourners," is compelling. All three versions praise Symeon's ascetic victory, a long-standing motif in Greek and Syriac hagiography, but by adding "Head of the Mourners," the scribe (whether the scribe of B_I or the later scribe) layered monastic authority onto Symeon's vocation.

The term محلك, "mourner," carries a history intertwined with the transition in the Syriac tradition from individual ascetic practice to institutionalized monasticism. It belongs to the vocabulary of early Syriac asceticism, alongside the terms , "solitary" or "single one," and בני מבא and בני מבא, the "sons of the covenant" and "daughters of the covenant." In the fourth century, these ascetics did not live in structured monastic communities like those then taking shape in Egypt but instead retreated alone into the wilderness or made their own arrangements in association with local ecclesiastical communities.¹⁶⁷ In the poetry of Ephrem

at the top of fols. 28v, عدمة عدم مدمة at the top of fols. 28v, 31v, 33v, 40r, 43v, 46v, 50v, 53v, 57v, 60v, 64v, 68v, 70v, 72v, and 75v. It also uses the running titles محمد, عمد at fol. 22v and sim-at the top of fols. 138v, 142v, 146v, and 151v. I judge these headings to be written in the same hand as the body of the text, not to have been added by a later scribe.

at fols. 50v, 55v, 89v, and 93v and عدد، عدد عدد at fols. 50v, 55v, 89v, and 93v and یت سیم (The Heroic Acts of Mar Symeon) at fols. 59v, 63v, 67v, 72v, 75v, 79v, 82v, 85v, 97v, 101v, 105v, 109v, 113v, 117v, 121v, and 125v.

In the fourth and early fifth centuries, the terms محلح, "mourner," and منعت, "single one," are more closely associated with and حمد عمرة, the "sons عدة عمد , the and حدة عمد , the "sons of the covenant" and "daughters of the covenant," are linked with church communities. For an introduction to this terminology, see S. H. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism," in Asceticism, ed. V. L. Wimbush and R. Valantasis (New York, 1995), 220-45, and S. P. Brock, The (d. 373), mournfulness characterized the internal character of the solitary. Sorrow for sin led ascetics to the desert in response to the beatitude "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted."168 In practice, the internal character of mournfulness manifested itself through external display: ascetics exhibited physical signs of sorrow, such as wearing long hair, chains, iron collars, and sackcloth, in order to atone for their own sins and share the pain of the sins of others. 169

As cenobitic communities inspired by Egyptian monasticism spread throughout fifth- and sixthcentury Syria, the terms "mourner" and "solitary" began to be used in cenobitic contexts to refer to monks. 170 The fifth- or sixth-century Syriac translation of the Life of Antony of Egypt renders μοναχός variously as مستدم (solitary), حلت (mourner), and من (brother). Antony is also called ملتة معنى المعانية ا "Head of the Mourners," in the fifth-century Syriac

Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian, Cistercian Studies Series 124 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1992), 131-41.

Matt. 5:4; Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria," 234. It is unclear whether Symeon saw himself as a mourner or was inspired by this approach to asceticism, since very few sources written by Symeon survive. According to Theodoret's History of the Monks of Syria (ch. 26.2), this particular beatitude inspired Symeon to pursue the ascetic life: text in Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen, Histoire des moines de Syrie, 2:162; translation in Price, A History of the Monks of Syria, 161. In contrast, Symeon is never called a mourner in either V or B₂.

169 D. Caner, "From the Pillar to the Prison: Penitential Spectacles in Early Byzantine Monasticism," in Ascetic Culture: Essays in Honor of Philip Rousseau, ed. B. Leyerle and R. Darling Young (Notre Dame, IN, 2013), 128-30.

Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria," 238.

F. F. Takeda provides a chart of all renderings of the term μοναγός in the various translations of the Life of Antony; see "Monastic Theology of the Syriac Version of the Life of Antony," StP 35 (2001): 154-55. R. Draguet published a critical edition, translation, and commentary of the Syriac version in La vie primitive de S. Antoine conservée en syriaque, 2 vols., CSCO 417-18, Syr. 183-84 (Louvain, 1980). It is certain that the Life was translated into Syriac by 587, since British Library Add. 14609, fols. 19r-44r, which contains the short version of the *Life*, dates to that year. A second 6th-century manuscript also preserves a longer version of Antony's Life in Syriac: British Library Add. 14646, fols. 1v-80v (Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum [n. 2 above], 3:1086-90). On the various recensions and their relationship with the Greek Life, see Draguet, La vie primitive de S. Antoine, 2:13*-112*, and D. Brakke, "The Greek and Syriac Versions of the Life of Antony," Le Muséon 107.1-2 (1994): 29-53. Although the two differ regarding the relationship between the Greek and Syriac texts, they agree on the approximate date of the Syriac translation, with

Martyrdom of Miles. 172 By the sixth and seventh centuries, monasteries throughout the Mediterranean were incorporating the physical dramatization of penance into their communal structures, as exemplified in the writings of John Klimax.¹⁷³ Abbots expressed their authority by issuing penitential commands, hearing the disciples' confessions, and sharing in the burden of their sins. 174 Thus, the B_I heading "Head of the Mourners" communicated both the distinct heritage of Syriac asceticism and the growing institutional authority of cenobitic monasticism. The new title positions Symeon as a spiritual father to monastic brothers whose column standing wiped clean their sins.

In addition, B_I displays a revised introduction that simultaneously invokes a broad audience and makes a particular appeal to monks. The first line specifies the intended audience: کستے محتے כמשל ביד בבינה המשלח של האוצים האושה בינה בינה حدة بعد باستة و المرام المرام المعسم (To our brothers, sons, and friends, children of the holy Catholic Church: we make known to you in our writings the heroic acts of the man of God, who was a friend to Christ). 175 In early Christian communities, brother and *friend* emphasized spiritual intimacy and equality. Kinship language also drew attention to vertical and horizontal relationships with Christ and God: brother conveyed shared brotherhood with Christ through the incarnation, while son communicated common descent

Draguet proposing a fifth- or sixth-century date (2:104*) and Brakke proposing a fifth-century date (53).

from God the Father. 176 At the same time, these terms took on particular importance in monastic contexts, emphasizing discipleship under a shared spiritual guide and the close bond between disciples. They announced the monk's abandonment of biological ties for ancestry and membership in a kinship group that was achieved through a shared purpose of spiritual advancement and shared acquisition of knowledge and skills. 177 In this way, the introductory line invites the readers into Symeon's monastic family and situates the document within a monastic community.

Finally, the scribe responsible for the text preserved in B₁ presents Symeon in positive relationships with monks. As discussed in the previous section, B₂ incorporated a series of seven new miracles into the narrative of the Syriac *Life*. B_I includes these miracles but revises them to showcase the prominence of monks in Symeon's cult. One miracle recounts how a paralytic was healed by the saint. In G the scribe simply calls the supplicant a paralytic, but in B_I the scribe identifies the paralytic as a monk (حنة). This is the first time in the textual tradition of the Syriac Life that a monk is touched by one of Symeon's miracles. In another new miracle, the scribe responsible for the text of B_I inserts Symeon's veneration for the monastic profession: حمحة مصلع، محسب مصلع، من باس مدلس مند ماعر איזוח תשמששא במשבז אביז עיע עטש אל محمد معدد (I am a sinful human and the least of all humans. My hands are not like those of all the bishops and monks who laid hands on you). 179 By introducing monks into the text, the scribe both promotes the monastic vocation and counts monks among Symeon's cult keepers.

The new heading and the introductory line make a direct appeal to monks as intended readers. Similarly, although his inclusion among those who venerated Symeon represents a minor alteration to the text, the monk is a significant addition to the list of Symeon's supplicants. These changes recast the

¹⁷² P. Bedjan, Acta martyrum et sanctorum, 7 vols. (Paris and Leipzig, 1890-97), 2:265.8. This martyrdom is preserved in a fifthcentury manuscript (British Library Add. 17204, fols. 8r-15r) as well as a fifth- to sixth-century manuscript (British Library Add. 14654, fols. 3r-5v). See Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, 3:1081-83; Brock, "Saints in Syriac" (n. 17 above), 185-86n17. R. Payne suggests that the text may date as early as the late fourth century in A State of Mixture: Christians, Zoroastrians, and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity (Oakland, CA, 2015), 77.

¹⁷³ Caner, "From the Pillar to the Prison," 127-46.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 139. See also C. Rapp, Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition (Berkeley, 2005), 73-81; B. Bitton-Ashkelony, "Penitence in Late Antique Monastic Literature," in Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions, ed. J. Assmann and G. Stroumsa (Leiden, 1999), 179-94.

¹⁷⁵ B₁, fol. 48v, col. 1, lns. 1-7; Bj., 507.14-508.1; translation adapted from Lent, 111.

¹⁷⁶ C. Rapp, Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium: Monks, Laymen, and Christian Ritual (Oxford, 2016), 7-8.

Ibid., 101.

Garitte's Latin translation uses the terms paralyticus and incurvatus but makes no reference to a monk (Gar., 20.26; BI, fol. 74v, col. 2, ln. 21; Bj., 550.3; Lent, 138).

¹⁷⁹ B_I, fol. 76r, col. 2, ln. 21-fol. 76v, col. 1, ln. 1; Bj., 552.18-20; translation adapted from Doran, 217.

text as recommended material for a monastic audience. They present Symeon as a monastic father ready to heal monks' spiritual ailments and physical maladies. Of course, the intended audience and the actual audience(s) are different groups, but in this case a reader's note confirms that a later monk did indeed seek out this version of Symeon's story. On the final folio of B_I, that monk recorded, ממא בידים אייר בידים אורים וויים אייר בידים אורים וויים אייר בידים אורים וויים איירים וויים וויים איירים וויים דר עטשא לטשאטן בים ואיר קטדם איני עודבשביו (Let all brothers be remembered in Christ everywhere and let their prayer be for the sinner and the unworthy one, forever and ever amen). 180 The practice of reading B₁ brought forgiveness and remembrance for monks, just as the composition of V brought redemption for Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar. The labor of producing the book and reflecting upon the text functioned in a sacred economy in which authors, scribes, and readers received spiritual remuneration for their actions. 181

Composing a Master Narrative

Previous sections showed that V's narrative was rooted in the persons and events central to Telanissos, whereas the scribe of B2 constructed a unified narrative of Symeon's life useful to pilgrims. The scribe responsible for B_I revised the contents and order once again: he integrated the texts of V and B₂ to create a narrative that favors the chronological and causal organization of B₂ alongside the detailed descriptions in V. 182 The result is a master legend of Symeon that imagines him simultaneously as a mythical and historical personage.

B_I, for the most part, reproduces the order of B₂, privileging the construction of a unified narrative

180 B_I, 133v; transcribed in Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuis a حقر translation my own. حقر is a passive participle; literally, the beginning of the line reads "All brothers are remembered in Christ . . . " The note is later than the composition of the manuscript and most likely postdates the 6th century. It is also worth mentioning that medieval monks played a central role in preserving V, B2, and B1, since all three were acquired from Dayr al-Suryān. See note 2.

Two important contributions on reading and writing as devotional acts are Krueger, Writing and Holiness (n. 65 above), and Walker, "Ascetic Literacy" (n. 16 above), 307–45. Penn's study of erasure in colophons and notes makes clear the power that such prayer requests bore ("Moving beyond the Palimpsest" [n. 16 above], 261-303).

182 Boero, "Symeon and the Making of the Stylite" (n. 12 above), 142-69.

over the peculiar arrangement of V (see table 3 in the appendix). Consequently, B₁'s narrative again makes use of a chronological and causal arrangement to show how Symeon's visions and ascetic trials endowed him with the ability to convey God's grace to his devotees. The structure links the intensification of Symeon's prayer life with a strengthening of his miraculous abilities. At the same time, B_I does retain the organization of V in one respect: whereas B₂ makes Symeon's culminating miracle his intervention with the emperor, B_I puts his ending of the drought in Telanissos in the final position.¹⁸³ This is one of the few points where B₁ diverges from B₂ in its ordering, revealing a deliberate choice to conclude Symeon's career with a great but local miracle. Thus, the scribe responsible for the version preserved in B_I privileges the unified narrative put forth in B₂ while also, to some extent, retaining the emphasis on the local, in line with the text of the Vatican manuscript. He crafts a narrative arc appealing to a broad set of readers—local devotees, long-distance pilgrims, and monks—as he declares in the first line of the revised introduction.

Despite his preference for the ordering of B_2 , the scribe responsible for the version preserved in B_I rejects B₂'s truncated narrative. ¹⁸⁴ He often records the long version of miracles preserved in V or presents versions of passages newly revised and rich in detail. He also reintegrates the panegyric passages and descriptions of ascetic accomplishments dropped from B₂.185 When faced with discrepancies between B₂ and V, the scribe of B_I chooses the detail that emphasizes the prestige of the saint and clarifies the text. 186 Of course, there is a

183 B₁, fol. 112r, col. 1, ln. 9-fol. 114r, col. 1, ln. 15; Bj., 611.4-614.22; Lent, 177-79.

184 For the relationship between B₁ and B₂ in the manuscript tradition, see note 155.

185 B₁, fol. 89v, col. 2, ln. 16-fol. 91v, col. 1, ln. 14; Bj., 574.20-577.9; Lent, 154-55. See omission at Gar., 32.

186 For example, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar record that in his first vision, Symeon entered the martyr shrine of Timothy, the disciple of an earlier holy man named Symeon (V, fol. 3v, col. 1, lns. 8-9; As., 271.21-22; Doran, 106). Modern scholars have not been able to determine the identity of this earlier Symeon (Doran, 106n10). G clarifies this detail by noting that Timothy was the disciple of the Paul the Apostle (Gar., 3.4). The scribe of the version preserved in B_I follows the emendation, linking Symeon with the disciple of Paul rather than an unknown saint (B_I, fol. 50v, col. 1, ln. 12; Bj., 511.3; Lent, 113). For additional examples, see Boero, "Symeon and the Making of the Stylite," 162-63.

chance that the scribe may have been based in a monastery in Telanissos and thus interested in the individuals associated with the everyday life of the cult site, as were the authors of V. It is more likely, however, that the scribe demonstrated an interest in historical detail not for the sake of preserving local memory but rather because such details are valuable in crafting a literary narrative of a saint. By reincorporating these details, the scribe constructs a historical personage whose saintly powers enabled him to influence the politics and economy of his own time.

Although the scribe responsible for B_I integrates many of the details found in V into his version of the text, he omits any mention of Bar Hatar and Symeon bar Eupolemos, effectively making his version of the Syriac Life anonymous. In late antiquity, countless saints' lives circulated anonymously with great success. In the case of the Syriac *Life*, the omission of authorship points to a transformation in the text's rhetorical position. Firsthand accounts were no longer necessary to authenticate the validity of the story, because Symeon's fame was far-reaching by the sixth century and his spiritual authority was no longer controversial. Accordingly, the scribe responsible for the version preserved in B_I followed the text of B₂ in removing first-person plural references within the text. 187 The scribe judged that his version of the Syriac Life offered an authoritative narrative of the saint's life, regardless of authorial attribution. He crafted his version of the text from a position of confidence that his material would be well received by multiple constituencies in Symeon's cult.

The changes in B_I are the work of a scribe who carefully collated versions of both V and B₂ to produce a highly refined narrative. 188 The attention to detail required in such a task indicates both a high level of scribal training and participation in an intellectual community that valued such texts. Syrian monastic culture certainly provided such an environment. 189

Marlia Mundell Mango tallies forty signed and dated late antique Syriac manuscripts associated with monasteries, most of which were produced around Antioch and Edessa. Of these, eleven were copied in monasteries, nineteen were bought elsewhere (and thus possibly copied in nonmonastic contexts), and the remaining ten do not specify where the manuscript was copied. 190 Monasteries possessed religious literature originally written in Syriac and translated from Greek into Syriac, in genres including homilies, monastic discourses, and letters. They also housed Syriac translations of Greek secular literature—for example, treatises on moral content by Lucian, Plutarch, and Themistios. 191 A scribe working in such a milieu could have had access to Syriac hagiographies, such as the Life of Barsauma, the Syriac translation of the Life of Antony, or select Persian Martyr Acts. 192 Exposure to such texts would have shaped the scribe's literary acumen, in particular his expectations for what a polished hagiography might look like.

In summary, B_I preserves a meticulously crafted narrative of Symeon's life. Like B₂, the order employs a chronological and causal arrangement to correlate the intensification of Symeon's ascetic and visionary experiences with the heightening of his miraculous abilities. By reintegrating details from V, the scribe constructs a historical personage capable of influencing both local

See note 49. 187

See note 155.

Across the eastern Mediterranean world, monasteries were centers of book production in late antiquity; see C. Rapp, "Christians and Their Manuscripts in the Greek East in the Fourth Century," in Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio: Atti del seminario di Erice (18-25 Settembre 1988), ed. G. Cavallo, G. de Gregorio, and M. Maniaci (Spoleto, 1991), 133-44. Papyrological evidence from Egypt indicates that monks were involved in all stages of book production: copying, illustrating, and binding; see C. Kotsifou, "Books

and Book Production in the Monastic Communities of Byzantine Egypt," in The Early Christian Book, ed. W. E. Klingshirn and L. Safran (Washington, DC, 2007), 50.

¹⁹⁰ Mango, "Patrons and Scribes Indicated in Syriac Manuscripts" (n. 16 above), 5.

A. Rigolio, "Some Syriac Monastic Encounters with Greek Literature," in Syriac Encounters: Papers from the Sixth North American Syriac Symposium, Duke University, 26-29 June 2011, ed. M. Doerfler, E. Fiano, and K. Smith (Leuven, 2015), 295-304.

The Life of Barsauma dates to the sixth century: for the Syriac version, see F. Nau, "Résumé de monographies syriaques," ROC 18 (1913): 270-76, 379-89; 19 (1914): 113-34, 278-89; for the Ethiopic version, see S. Grébaut, "Vie de Barsoma le Syrien," ROC 13 (1908): 337-45; 14 (1909): 135-42, 264-75, 401-16. For the Syriac translation of the Life of Antony, see Draguet, La vie primitive de S. Antoine (n. 171 above). The Persian Martyr Acts are difficult to date and only select Acts date to the fourth, fifth, and early sixth centuries. One of the strongest criteria for dating individual Acts is the date of the earliest manuscript(s) in which they are preserved. For a brief overview of the surviving Persian Martyr Acts, manuscripts that record each Act, and editions of texts, see S. P. Brock, The History of the Holy Mar Ma'in with a Guide to the Persian Martyr Acts, Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation 1 (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), 77-91.

politics and the politics of the empire. The omission of first-person references and of the names of the original authors makes the narrative less personal but conveys the scribe's confidence in the authority of his work. The result is a master legend of Symeon as both a historical and mythical figure, a narrative distinguished by a public quality quite different from V's persistently private perspective on the saint. 193

Conclusion

Scholars of hagiographic literature emphasize that the authors of saints' lives shaped their texts according to particular interests and under the pressure of a specific audience's concerns. Most often, researchers highlight the ideological divergences between hagiographies. 194 This article has expanded that approach to show the tensions and seams within a single textual tradition. It has teased out the transformations of the Syriac *Life of* Symeon the Stylite in the fifth and sixth centuries, illuminating the interconnection between the growth of the text and the growth of the cult. The three late antique manuscripts of the Syriac Life of Symeon offer special insight into the development of a hagiographic tradition at the earliest stage of its existence, in a period for which substantial manuscript evidence almost never survives.

Each manuscript emphasizes the importance of select constituencies in cult practice: local residents, pilgrims, and monks. The authors of V present an account of Symeon's life shaped by their personal contact with the saint and the stories of Symeon's closest associates. They stress their firsthand knowledge of Symeon, local details and personalities of village life, and the physicality of Symeon's being. In doing so, they rhetorically position their representation of Symeon as one available only through a select set of local storytellers. The scribe responsible for the version preserved in B2 composes a unified narrative that could easily introduce pilgrims to Symeon's life and to the proper veneration of the saint. The contents and new order of the text display for the reader the progressive transformation made available through prayer. Thus, through imitation, they prepare

pilgrims for their spiritual journey. The scribe responsi-

ble for the version preserved in B₁ remakes Symeon into

fied narrative of the saint's life, the tradition was decidedly open. Scribes altered the text in response both to their own conception of the saint and to the perceived needs of specific cult practitioners. In fact, the tradition did not stop with the composition of B_I. In a ninthcentury note attached to the final folio of B₂, a deacon named Symeon recorded that he purchased and gifted the manuscript to the cult site. 195 He declares, __ 1 ישאבל של באכא מוא מוא במי אם וובאסב משי הפעם כנות (Whoever requests this book, let him read it or copy from it or collate [another manuscript] with it). 196 Similarly, the medieval versions (Syriac, Georgian, and Arabic) of the Syriac Life often diverge from the late antique versions in their contents and order. Several display substantial contamination. Both sets of evidence demonstrate an ongoing attempt to reshape the narrative of Symeon's life, although the late dates of these manuscripts, like most hagiographies, make it difficult to speak with specificity about the communal contexts that shaped scribes' interpretations of the saint. 197

195 The note appears on B₂, fol. 152r, col. 1, lns. 1–34. The note's author states that he gifted the manuscript to only reson relation באבא מבי, שבבא (the holy temple of the blessed Mar Symeon; Ins. 3-4). He paid מו באלשם באשם באלשם יש (30- and 60- and 100-fold) for it (lns. 15-16). Wright transcribed lines 1-8. The latter section of the note is faded. Because of its length, I do not transcribe the full note here. The note probably dates to the ninth century, an assessment based on paleographical analysis and the following note (in an early Arabic hand), which records events in 829/30 and 835/36 (Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, 3:1152-53). The handwriting of the note is similar to that of Vaticanus Syriacus 116, fol. 14r, which dates to 857, and British Library Add. 14579, fol. 86, which dates to 913 (Hatch, An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts [n. 23 above], 119, no. lxviii; 122, no. lxxi).

196 B_2 , fol. 152r, col. 1, lns. 22–24. The pa"el of the verb באבל can also refer to punctuating or adding points to a manuscript.

For a list of the later Syriac manuscripts, see note 10. Several Arabic and Georgian translations of the text have received little or no study. Select medieval manuscripts contain colophons and notes regarding their context of composition.

a spiritual father worthy of veneration among monastic brethren. Together, the three versions illustrate the growth of the text from a deeply privatized account of a saint's life to a master legend that embraces both the mythical and historical character of the saint. Despite the progressive attempt to create a uni-

Slater, Trail of Miracles (n. 44 above), 146-48.

¹⁹⁴ Harvey's analysis of the three different lives of Symeon in "The Sense of a Stylite" ([n. 47 above], 376-94) is an excellent example of the dominant approach. On this approach more broadly, see Heffernan, Sacred Biography (n. 42 above), 3-37.

The three late antique manuscripts of the Syriac Life illustrate the complex formation of a hagiographical tradition in late antiquity. The creation and subsequent revisions of the text offer the opportunity to take part in a multigenerational conversation about Symeon. This conversation reproduced some earlier notions of sanctity, occluded others, and generated new conceptions of him. Revision functioned as ongoing commentary on his power and presence. But this act was not neutral: it constantly repositioned the boundaries of Symeon's sanctity in dialogue with the needs of specific cult constituencies. These manuscripts elucidate the discursive nature of the representation of a saint within a single textual tradition.

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Appendix

Order of V Table 1.

 \mathbf{v}

Chs. 1-27:*

Symeon's early life, first vision, first miracles in Sisa, entry into and expulsion from Teleda monastery, and entry into

Chs. 28-32:

Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons

Chs. 33-36:

Miracles: healing of supplicants from Bayt Lāhā, plain of Antioch, and other local communities

Ch. 37:

Praise

Chs. 38-39:

Miracles: healing of priest from the north; protection of man from Aleppo's field

Chs. 40-43:

Visions of Moses and Elijah

Ch. 44:

Ascetic practices

Chs. 45-47:

Praise

Chs. 48-55:

Decay and healing of Symeon's foot

Chs. 56-60:

Miracles: political interventions on behalf of dye workers and youth who wished to avoid service on civic council; punishment of corrupt politicians

Chs. 61-64:

Miracles: defense of towns from animal infestation and drought

(continued)

 \mathbf{v}

Chs. 65-66:

Praise

Chs. 67-73:

Miracles: in camp of tayyāyē, Persia, and ships at sea

Miracle: Symeon ends drought in Telanissos

Chs. 77-78:

Praise

Chs. 79-88:

Miracles: healing and protection of supplicants from Sheba, Persia, Armenia, Samosata, Dalok (unidentified place or perhaps Dolichē), Germanikeia (Mar'aš in Syriac), the Black Mountain

Chs. 89-92:

Miracles: healing of man from Aleppo, youth living 3 miles from cult site, and youth from low-lying country; punishment of deacon from Telanissos

Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons

Chs. 102-6:

Symeon ascends first column; death of brother Shemshi

Symeon's ascent to taller columns; defense of column

Chs. 114-20:

Death

Chs. 121-23:

Symeon's letter to the emperor

Chs. 124-29:

Symeon's funeral procession and burial in Antioch

Chapter enumeration from Doran, The Lives of Simeon Stylites.

Table 2. Comparison of organization of G and B_2 with $V\!,$ in order of G and B_2

G and B ₂	v
G chs. 1-25;* B ₂ fols. 134r-141v	Chs. 1–27: Symeon's early life, first vision, first miracles in Sisa, entry into and expulsion from Teleda monastery, and entry into Telanissos
G chs. 26–30; B ₂ fols. 141v–142v	Chs. 28–32: Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons
G chs. 31–34; B ₂ fols. 143r–144r	Chs. 33–36: Miracles: healing of supplicants from Bayt Lāhā, plain of Antioch, and other local communities
—†	Chs. 37: Praise
G chs. 35–38; B ₂ fols. 144r–145r	Chs. 89–92: Miracles: healing of man from Aleppo, youth living 3 miles from cult site, and youth from low-lying country; punishment of deacon from Telanissos
G chs. 39–49; B ₂ fols. 145r–146v	Chs. 93–101: Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons
G chs. 50-54	Chs. 102–6: Symeon ascends first column; death of brother Shemshi
_	Chs. 77–78: Praise
G chs. 55–61; B ₂ fols. 147r–148r: Additional battles with Satan; seven new miracles	_
G chs. 62–71; B ₂ fols. 148r–150v	Chs. 79–88: Miracles: healing and protection of supplicants from Sheba, Persia, Armenia, Samosata, Dalok (unidentified place or per- haps Dolichē), Germanikeia (Marʿaš in Syriac), the Black Mountain
G chs. 72-73	Chs. 38–39 Miracles: healing of priest from the north; protection of man from Aleppo's field

(continued)

G and B ₂	v
G chs. 74-77	Chs. 40–43: Visions of Moses and Elijah
G ch. 78	Ch. 44: Ascetic practices
_	Chs. 45-47: Praise
G chs. 79–85	Chs. 48–55: Decay and healing of Symeon's foot
G chs. 86–89	Chs. 56–60: Miracles: political interventions on behalf of dye workers and youth who wished to avoid service on civic council; punishment of corrupt politicians
G chs. 90–92	Chs. 61–64: Miracles: defense of towns from animal infestation and drought
_	Chs. 65–66: Praise
G chs. 93–98	Chs. 67–73: Miracles: in camp of <i>ṭayyāyē</i> , Persia, and ships at sea
G chs. 99-100; B ₂ fols. 151r-151v	Chs. 74–76: Miracle: Symeon ends drought in Telanissos
G chs. 101–2; B ₂ fol. 151v	Chs. 121–23: Symeon's letter to the emperor
G chs. 103–12	Chs. 107–13: Symeon's ascent to taller columns; defense of column
G chs. 113–18	Chs. 114–20: Death
G chs. 119–23	Chs. 124–29: Symeon's funeral procession and burial in Antioch

^{*} Chapter enumeration of G from Garitte, \textit{Vies g\'eorgiennes}, coordinated with surviving folios of B_2 .

 $[\]dagger$ No corresponding text.

Table 3. Comparison of organization of $B_{\rm I}$, V, and G and $B_{\rm 2}$, in order of $B_{\rm I}$

B _I	v	G and B ₂	
Fols. 48v–61v*	Chs. 1–27: Symeon's early life, first vision, first miracles in Sisa, entry into and expulsion from Teleda monastery, and entry into Telanissos	G chs. 1–25; B ₂ fols. 134r–141v	
Fols. 61v–63v	Chs. 28–32: Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons	G chs. 26–30; B ₂ fols. 141v–142v	
Fols. 63v–65r	Chs. 33–36: Miracles: healing of supplicants from Bayt Lāhā, plain of Antioch, and other local communities	G chs. 31–34; B ₂ fols. 143r–144r	
- †	Ch. 37: Praise	_	
Fols. 65r–66v	Chs. 89–92 Miracles: healing of man from Aleppo, youth living 3 miles from cult site, and youth from low-lying country; punishment of deacon from Telanissos	G chs. 35–38; B ₂ fols. 144r–145r	
Fols. 66v–69v	Chs. 93–101: Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons	G chs. 39–49; B ₂ fols. 145r–146v	
Fols. 69v–72r	Chs. 102–6: Symeon ascends first column; death of brother Shemshi	G chs. 50-54	
Fols. 72r–74r	Chs. 77–78: Praise	_	
Fols. 74r–77v	_	G chs. 55–61; B ₂ fols. 147r–148r: Additional battles with Satan; seven new miracles	
Fols. 77v–84r	Chs. 79–88: Miracles: healing and protection of supplicants from Sheba, Persia, Armenia, Samosata, Dalok (unidentified place or perhaps Dolichē), Germanikeia (Marʿaš in Syriac), the Black Mountain	G chs. 62–71; B ₂ fols. 148r–150v	

(continued)

$B_{\mathbf{I}}$	\mathbf{v}	G and B ₂	
Fols. 84r–87r	Chs. 38–39 Miracles: healing of priest from the north; protection of man from Aleppo's field	G chs. 72-73	
Fols. 87r–89r	Chs. 40–43: Visions of Moses and Elijah	G ch. 74–77	
Fols. 89r–89v	Ch. 44: Ascetic practices	G ch. 78	
Fols. 89v–91v	Chs. 45–47: Praise	_	
Fols. 91v–94r	Chs. 48–55: Decay and healing of Symeon's foot	G chs. 79–85	
Fols. 94r–98v	Chs. 56–60: Miracles: political interventions on behalf of dye workers and youth who wished to avoid service on civic council; punishment of corrupt politicians	G chs. 86–89	
Fols. 98v–102v	Chs. 61–64: Miracles: defense of towns from animal infestation and drought	G chs. 90–92	
Fols. 102V–104r	Chs. 65–66: Praise	_	
Fols. 104r–111v	Chs. 67–73: Miracles: in camp of <i>ṭayyāyē</i> , Persia, and ships at sea	G chs. 93–98	
Fols. 111v–114v	Chs. 74–76: Miracle: Symeon ends drought in Telanissos	G chs. 99–100; B ₂ fols. 1511–151v	
Fols. 114v–120v	Chs. 107–13: Symeon's ascent to taller columns; defense of column	G chs. 103–12	
Fols. 120v–126r	Chs. 114–120: Death	G chs. 113–118	
Fols. 126r–127r	Chs. 121–23: Symeon's letter to the emperor	G chs. 101–2; B ₂ fol. 151V	
Fols. 127r–130v	Chs. 124–29: Symeon's funeral procession and burial in Antioch	G chs. 119–23	

 $^{^{*}}$ Because $B_{\rm I}$ lacks chapter enumeration in any edition or translation, I have provided folio numbers only.

 $[\]dagger$ No corresponding text.